



CBD

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

22 May 2007
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

**Statement of Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
on the Occasion of the
High-level Segment of the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
13 September, 2007, Madrid, Spain**

Excellencies,

Thanks to the leadership of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Mr. Yvo de Boer, the United Nations General Assembly will convene on 24 September 2007 - in less than seven working days from now - for the first time in its history a summit of Heads of State exclusively devoted to climate change. In July this year, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Sheikha Haya Al Khalifa, also convened an informal thematic debate on "Climate Change as a Global Challenge". Furthermore, the Secretary-General, for the first time, designated earlier this year three special envoys on the issue of climate change. In April 2007, at the initiative of the United Kingdom, the United Nations Security Council held a first-ever debate on "The Impact of Climate Change on Security".

Indeed, climate change is real and is affecting all continents, all countries, and all ecosystems. Climate change is certainly an energy-related issue, as well as technological, financial, and security issue, but it is also an environmental issue. Ecosystems are impacted by climate change, but they can also contribute to its agenda. Healthy ecosystems, oceans, wetlands, and peatlands, can contribute to addressing the climate change challenge. However, climate change is now among the main drivers to the loss of biodiversity.

According to the recent fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), up to 30 per cent of the known species may disappear before the end of the century. It is for this reason that the international community celebrated, on 22 May this year, the International Day for Biological Diversity on "Biodiversity and Climate Change", preceded by the convening of a meeting between IPCC experts and the SBSTTA Bureau – the scientific body of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), thanks to the financial contribution of Canada. If climate change will affect all countries, then the most vulnerable and less prepared ones will suffer the most. As an example, 25 to 40 per cent of species' habitat of South Africa, which is one of the richest countries in biodiversity, could be lost by 2055. The IPCC report also confirmed that by 2050, water availability in dry areas at mid-latitudes is expected to decrease by 30 per cent.



United Nations
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montreal, QC H2Y 1N9, Canada

Tel.: +1 514 288 2220
Fax : +1 514 288 6588

www.cbd.int
secretariat@cbd.int

According to the World Heritage Convention, 10 to 40 per cent of plant species of four protected areas in South Africa will be lost by 2050 as a result of changing climate conditions. Indeed, in the area of a warmer planet, all species, including human kind, would have to adapt or perish. It is for this reason that the 4000 participants who attended the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP-8) in March 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil, adopted Decision VIII/30 on “Biodiversity and Climate Change: guidance to promote synergy among activities for biodiversity conservation, mitigating or adapting to climate change and combating land degradation”. In paragraph 9 of the Decision, Parties requested the Executive Secretary, through the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the Rio conventions, to consider the options in the note by the Executive Secretary on options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio conventions prepared for the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In considering these options, the Group may identify mutually supportive activities to be conducted by the secretariats of the Rio conventions, Parties and relevant organizations, taking into account the findings of the two reports on biodiversity and climate change for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) prior to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-9). In paragraph 10 of the same decision, Parties also requested the Executive Secretary to transmit the present decision, including the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, to relevant bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species, and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and to ensure follow-up through the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio conventions.

Furthermore, in July this year, the twelfth meeting of SBSTTA, held in Paris, adopted Recommendation XII/5 on “Proposals for the integration of climate-change activities within the programmes of work of the Convention, options for mutually supportive actions addressing climate change within the Rio conventions and a summary of the findings of the global Assessment on Peatlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change”. In paragraph 2 (c) of the Recommendation, Parties requested the Executive Secretary to develop proposals for mutually supportive activities, as requested in paragraph 9 of Decision VIII/30, for consideration at the thirteenth meeting of SBSTTA, taking into account the views discussed by the Subsidiary Body at its twelfth meeting, bearing in mind that these views were not endorsed by Parties during that session because the report of the Joint Liaison Group meeting was not available and, therefore, was not discussed.

Subsequently, on 7 June 2007, the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the three Rio conventions met in Bonn under the leadership of Mr. de Boer. The JLG welcomed the document presented by the CBD, as requested by the Curitiba decision aiming at enhancing the synergies between the secretariats of the three Rio conventions. This morning, here in Madrid, the JLG met again to consider the options submitted by the CBD Secretariat. It was agreed that the three secretariats will join forces in the four areas: 1) education in collaboration with UNESCO; 2) communication and outreach; 3) a joint website; and 4) a joint newsletter. The participants also agreed to convene their next

meeting in Bonn in May 2008, in conjunction with the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP-9). It will be the first time that COP will meet in Bonn, where the headquarters of the two sister conventions - UNFCCC and UNCCD – are located.

Excellencies,

Here in Madrid, under the leadership of Her Excellency Ms. Cristina Narbona, Minister of Environment of Spain and Chair of COP-8 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), a new era of the UNCCD has started. In Curitiba, under the leadership of Her Excellency Mrs. Marina Silva, Minister of Environment of Brazil and President of COP-8 of the CBD, a new era of enhancing implementation of the three Rio conventions was born. Spain is also member of another COP Bureau, the Bureau of the CBD.

The Bureau of COP-8 of the CBD will play a leadership role in the German presidency of our next COP meeting in 2008. Germany, to the triple presidency of the European Union, as well as the Heligendamm Declaration related to Biodiversity and the Potsdam Initiative, has taken the lead to ensure that COP-9 will be considered as a landmark event in the renewed effort of the international community to address the intertwined challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation, including desertification. To this end, a new era in the relationship among the three Rio conventions is urgently required. I would like to take this opportunity to extend to your new Executive Secretary, Mr. Luc Gnacadja, my warmest congratulations upon his well deserved appointment and I can assure him, on behalf of my colleagues, that the CBD Secretariat will spare no efforts to write with him, and our colleague Mr. Yvo de Boer, a new page in the history of cooperation among the Secretariats of the three sister conventions.

Thank you for your kind attention.
