



Secretariat of the  
**Convention on Biological Diversity**



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DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY  
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**BIODIVERSITY  
AND AGRICULTURE**

**STATEMENT**

by

**AHMED DJOGHLAF**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

of the

**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

at the opening session

of the

**SECOND MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING  
GROUP ON PROTECTED AREAS**

*FAO, Rome, 11 February 2008*

*Please check against delivery*



Distinguished delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas in this magnificent city of Rome, and in the prestigious building of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Director-General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf, and his team for welcoming us to their facilities and for supporting the preparation of the meeting.

I also wish to thank the Italian Government for its contribution in advancing the protected areas agenda of the Convention. The grand Italian aura and the magnificent Tuscan hospitality are fondly remembered by many of the delegates who attended the first meeting of the Working Group in Montecatini in June 2005. The work achieved then was an important milestone in the annals of protected areas, as it resulted in recommendations that laid basis for the implementation of the ambitious programme of work. Italy has been leading by example. Almost 10 per cent of Italy is officially classified as protected areas. A further 10 per cent is protected under community and regional initiatives. In particular, I wish to highlight the Pelagos Sanctuary for Mammals in the northern Tyrrhenian Sea, a 2.8 million-hectare transboundary marine protected area between Italy, France, and Monaco.

Italy is truly an appropriate host for our meetings this week. Not only has this country shown real commitment to safeguarding protected areas, but it has also worked to include all stakeholders in such initiatives and has worked closely with neighbouring countries. Italy is one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in Europe and in the Mediterranean basin, with over 57,000 species in its fauna and over 6,700 species in its higher plant flora (196 families and 1267 genera). Among European countries, it has the highest number of plants, as well as terrestrial and freshwater animals (46,200 species). As a whole, Italian terrestrial and inland water animals represent more than one third of the European fauna.

I commend Italy for its efforts and its continued support to the Convention. Well managed protected areas are a proven mechanism for the conservation and maintenance of healthy ecosystems and the services they provide.

As Italy's very own Leonardo da Vinci once said: "In rivers, the water that you touch is the last of what has passed and the first of that which comes; so with present time." We are here today thanks to the efforts and achievements of many individuals, organizations, and governments over the past several years. However, what lays ahead is dependent on your efforts this week.

In 2004, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention, at its seventh meeting, adopted a programme of work on protected areas (POWPA) to support the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive, ecologically representative and effectively managed national and regional systems of protected areas with ambitious goals and clearly defined time-bound targets.

We are here today assembled for the second time as a working group established to support review and implementation of this work programme to assess progress achieved and shape the way for future direction. There is no doubt in the mind of anyone present today that four years after its adoption, the programme of work on protected areas, has been a success and some of its ambitious deadlines have passed. Indeed, since its adoption some 2,300 new

terrestrial protected areas and 50 new marine protected areas, covering approximately 50 million hectares, have been established. Currently, numbering in excess of 100,000, protected areas represent 11.6 per cent of the Earth's terrestrial surface- nearly 19 million square kilometres, an area of the size of India and China combined.

Despite this remarkable progress, protected areas are often poorly understood and greatly undervalued by markets, politicians, and the general public. Despite the significant monetary and non-monetary values of protected areas, their value does not register in conventional markets and they are therefore not considered to be real economic assets by policy makers. As a result, protected areas do not receive crucial national budget prioritization, and lamentably, more often than not, funding is lacking for their creation and management. The benefits of protected areas extend spatially far beyond their boundaries. In order to support and augment these benefits, consideration of protected areas must be incorporated into wider sustainable development and economic strategies. Their benefits and values need to be recognized and showcased in order to generate a stronger call to action for policy makers and other stakeholders. In this regard, I am happy to inform you that the Secretariat has compiled a brochure summarizing case studies on the ecological, economic, social and cultural benefits of protected areas. We hope that it will help catalyze increased action across all sectors.

As Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan has stated, “these priceless places-national parks-wilderness preserves- community managed areas together, serve as green lungs of the planet”. Indeed, protected areas are a major source of material and non-material wealth. The World Bank notes that natural capital constitutes 26 per cent of the total wealth of low-income countries. Protected areas represent important stocks of natural, cultural and social capital, supporting the livelihoods and wellbeing of many. For example:

- In Cambodia, fuelwood, fishing and other resources, provided by mangrove protected areas, constitute 20 to 58 per cent of household income, with heavier reliance among poorer households.
- The Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala generates an annual income of approximately US\$ 47 million and provides employment to 7,000 people.
- Pollination services of protected areas in the Cape Region of South Africa are worth approximately US\$ 400 million annually.
- Approximately 4.43 gigatonnes of carbon are sequestered in Canada's national parks. If society had to replace this stored carbon, it would cost between \$ 11 billion and \$ 2.2 trillion depending upon the valuation of the carbon sequestration function.
- The value of Uganda's protected areas as a carbon sink is estimated at \$ 20.3 million annually.
- Marine Protected Areas (or MPAs) protect exploited species during critical stages of their life, and act as insurance against poor and inadequate fishery management. In the Navakavu MPA, in Fiji, the average monthly household income (US\$ 251) in January 2007 was more than double that of a non-MPA household (US\$ 118).
- A study conducted in 2003 found that 33 of the world's 105 largest cities obtain a significant proportion of their drinking water from protected areas.
- And the list of benefits goes on

The positive contribution of protected areas to the livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the society is very high indeed. There is clear evidence that well managed protected areas yield significant benefits, which can be translated into cumulative advantages across a national economy. Moreover, as unprecedented climate change becomes a reality, protected areas are key to buffering the inevitable, yet unpredictable impacts.

The effective implementation of the POWPA calls, therefore, for enhanced efforts to catalyze political will at the highest level and commitment across all segments of the society. I would like therefore to pay tribute to the President of the Federated States of Micronesia, Excellency Emanuel Mori and the participation of the Ministers of Environment of Ecuador, Madagascar and Mexico, for gracing us with their presence our meeting today. This is a clear demonstration of their commitment and a mirror of their political will. For the first time in the history of the Convention, a Head of a State and three ministers are not only attending a Working Group meeting, but also show-casing their achievements, commitment and the importance they attach to the programme of work on protected areas. I express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all of them and invite all of you to join me in given a big hand to our honourable guests. Thank you honourable guests.

Two years ago in Curitiba, similar political will was displayed by parties to address the issue of capacity building. Indeed designating a piece of land as a “protected area” is merely the first step in safeguarding biological diversity. Unfortunately, all too often, the existing system of protected areas is not effectively managed, nor does it adequately represent all ecosystems, habitats and species important for conservation. In 2006, against the backdrop of the decree by the President of Brazil that 6.4 million hectares of the Amazon rainforest were to be protected and the “Micronesia Challenge” launched by the Micronesian States that aims at placing 30 per cent of marine areas and 20 per cent of forest areas under protection, the Conference of the Parties decided to enhance the implementation of the programme of work and to convene this week’s meeting in order to review progress in implementation and to explore options for mobilizing financial resources for its implementation.

The 4,000 participants attending the Curitiba meeting recognized that developing countries were facing capacity-building constraints and a lack of implementation, and requested the Secretariat to organize regional workshops to review the implementation of the programme of work and to build capacity. I am very pleased to report that a vibrant partnership through an informal and effective consortium of partners we call the “POWPA Friends” has been established. This unique and innovative mechanism comprises Governments, non-governmental organizations as well as international organizations. It includes the following partners: The Nature Conservancy, WWF, Conservation International, BirdLife International, Wildlife Conservation Society, IUCN–World Commission on Protected Areas, the European Commission, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Environment Canada, the Netherlands, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods Project. This informal consortium in partnership with your Secretariat mobilized more than US\$ 700,000 and organized in less than one year a series of nine sub-regional workshops. As a result nearly 600 planners, practitioners and policy makers from some 100 countries have been trained and benefited from their respective exchange of experience and promoted best practices. These workshops have provided practical hands-on tools and training for the implementation of the programme of work. They have also provided an important platform for participating countries to identify real challenges and constraints in implementation

and practical ways and means to address those constraints. Over the weekend, a training workshop was organized for the participants of our today meeting. Let me therefore pay tribute to the POWPA Friends for their time, financial contribution, and commitment, and above all, for their passion for active cooperation and partnerships to support implementation. I also thank all those Parties that contributed financial resources and / or hosted the regional workshops. I invite all of you to join me in given a big hand to the POWPA Friends. Thank you Friends of POWPA.

I invite all relevant partners present today to join the POWPA Friends and to provide additional financial support. The reality of the matter is that the implementation of the POWPA needs enhanced funding. Since the Convention came into force in 1993, the world's protected areas grew by almost 100 per cent in number and 60 per cent in size, yet in the same period, international financing for biodiversity conservation grew only 38 per cent. However, I wish to note that the financial mechanism of the Convention, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), has been strongly supporting the work of the CBD. I congratulate Mrs. Monique Barbut, CEO of GEF, and her team for the launch in Paris last July, at the margins of the second meeting of the Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI), of the early action grant project aimed at catalysing the implementation of early-stage activities of the programme of work.

It is the first time in the history of the GEF that a multi-million dollar project has been initiated in support to a work programme of the Convention. I would like also to congratulate UNDP, as the implementing agency, for its outstanding collaboration in the implementation of this unique initiative. We in the Convention Secretariat look forward to discussing with our partners the need for increasing the size and scope of this project to cover additional activities of the programme of work. Indeed additional financial resources are urgently required for the consolidating the progress achieved in the implementation of the work programme.

How are we to meet the additional resource requirements? Building strong institutional arrangements for financing the implementation of the programme of work is essential. Institutions, including governments, donors, international NGOs and the private sector, should seek opportunities to create synergies and partnerships, and approach the lack of funding through concerted efforts. There is a need for developing a diversified financial portfolio of both traditional and innovative financial mechanisms and a need for development and implementation of innovative financial mechanisms. To this end, I would like to pay tribute to the government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the "Life Web initiative" which will include a Global Campaign on protected area to be launched at the high level segment of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Bonn from 28 to 30 May 2008. Because protected areas are considered "safety-nets" for life on Earth, this first-ever initiative aims to match voluntary commitments by States to designate new protected areas with the respective commitment of donors for dedicated financing for these areas. I invite all of you to join me in giving a big hand to Germany for their unique effort in making the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties a landmark event in the life of the Convention. Thank you Germany.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In the face of increasing human pressure on the planet's resources, an effective protected area system is the best hope for conserving ecosystems, habitats and species and to help achieve the 2010 biodiversity target. Protected areas and the effective implementation of the programme of work constitute a central element for achieving the three objectives of the Convention. It is a

framework for cooperation between Governments, donors, NGOs and local people – without such collaboration no projects will be sustainable over the long-term. Indeed, building a bridge between all stakeholders and national interests is of a crucial importance.

As we work towards this goal we should be inspired by Leonardo da Vinci – not only by his words, but his visionary and architectural legacies. In 1502, at the request of Ottoman Sultan Beyazid II of Istanbul, da Vinci designed a single-span bridge across the Bosphorus. However, the Sultan turned his back on the plans, believing the design could not be carried out. Five hundred years later, Leonardo da Vinci's plans were dusted off, and now the bridge has been built, not only to da Vinci's exact specifications in Turkey, but on a smaller scale in other countries as well. Today, the prospect of forging workable linkages between all stakeholders may seem just as improbably as da Vinci's single-span design did five hundred years ago, but the bridges must be built to secure the health of ecosystems, biodiversity, the planet, and our well-being. With foresight, cooperation, and perseverance, I have no doubt that it can be achieved. It must be achieved.

Indeed protected areas, to quote from Nelson Mandela, are “genetic store-houses that promise a healthier future for the planet and its people. Safeguarding these precious areas means safeguarding our future”. Through your deliberations this week, ladies and gentlemen, you have the responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of the programme of work on protected areas for safeguarding our future and the future of our children. In the fulfillment of our heavy responsibility you can always count on each and every staff of your secretariat. I wish you success.

I thank you for your kind attention.