



Secretariat of the  
**Convention on Biological Diversity**



INTERNATIONAL  
DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY  
**22 May 2008**  
**BIODIVERSITY  
AND AGRICULTURE**

**STATEMENT**

by

**AHMED DJOHLAF**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

of the

**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

at the tenth special session

of the

**GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT  
FORUM**

**“MOBILIZING FINANCE FOR THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE”**

*Monaco, 20-22 February 2008*

*Please check against delivery*



ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE  
COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008



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

<http://www.cbd.int>  
[secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are gathered here today in the beautiful Principality of Monaco, a principality resplendent with wealth and majesty; a principality that has been ruled by the Grimaldi family for the last 700 years; a principality that is forward-looking and innovative despite being steeped in history.

Over a century ago, Prince Albert I of Monaco undertook numerous ocean expeditions to advance oceanic science. Thanks to one expedition to a glacier on Spitsbergen in Norway, we know today that the glacier has retreated 6km in the last 100 years. As President of the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean, Prince Rainier III of Monaco worked to raise awareness of and to combat marine pollution in the Mediterranean. Then, as now, Monaco has been a leader in environmental action. His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco has taken up where his predecessors left off and is an ardent supporter of both environmental and development issues; as shown through his patronage of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Billion Tree Campaign and the inauguration of the Prince Albert II Foundation. Thus, it is only fitting that we are here today in a nation that is committed to participating in international efforts to address the unprecedented environmental challenges that face us today.

Climate change impacts every community and every ecosystem on the planet. It does not just alter weather patterns and affect rainfall. It alters availability and access to basic necessities. It alters lives. As UNEP's 4th Global Environment Outlook highlights, environmental change affects human development options. I speak to you today as the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. But I also speak to you today as a concerned professional who knows the importance of acting on climate-change issues with unprecedented speed and energy, who understands the importance of synergizing our actions to derive the most benefit from every initiative. And I am here to highlight the fact that the efforts to combat climate change and efforts to conserve biodiversity go hand-in-hand; that one is not attainable without the other. Biodiversity cannot be conserved without mitigating climate change, just as the impacts of climate change cannot be lessened without robust ecosystems and diversity in species. Hence, not only must we move to a low-carbon society, as accentuated in Bali, we must at the same time maintain a high-biodiversity planet. We must move to a "*low-carbon and high-biodiversity economy*", an economy that mitigates climate change, protects biodiversity, and improves our resilience to the unpredictable yet inevitable impacts of climate change.

Unfortunately, the second part of the equation is very much under threat from climate change. The second edition of the Convention's Global Biodiversity Outlook and the UNEP GEO-4 have both confirmed that climate change is one of the main drivers of global biodiversity loss. As a result of changes in climate, species are altering both their ranges and many life-events such as hibernation, migration, and reproduction. Forest ecosystems, key to mitigating climate change, are being devastated:

- In North America, we see the rapid population growth of the Pine Beetle at the expense of pine forests—with losses of mature pine expected to reach 50 per cent by this year and 80 per cent by 2013;
- In the Amazon Basin, we see an expected increase of the frequency of forest fires by 60 per cent if the global average temperature increases by 3 degrees;

- In Western Europe, increasing invasions of chestnut forests by the Leaf Miner moth are causing significant die-offs.

As our Executive Director, Achim Steiner, has noted, “*If we do not stop the climate-change juggernaut, many, if not all, of the other strategies for protecting increasingly threatened species and habitats will be doomed to failure.*” That being said, the second half of the equation is actually part of the solution. The relationship between biodiversity and climate change is a two-way street. Yes, climate change is a significant driver of biodiversity loss. And indeed loss of biodiversity and the deterioration of natural habitats further contribute to climate change. In fact, deforestation, including the loss of forested peatlands, is estimated to account for between 18 and 25 per cent of all carbon emissions. However, while the reports conclude that biodiversity has never been so severely jeopardized as it is today, we also know that a resilient and robust ecosystem, with diverse species, is a key factor in mitigating the effects of climate change. A variety of crops and livestock are important resources against changing growing conditions. Intact coral reefs and mangroves are an important protection against coastal erosion from intensified storms events and sea-level rise. In fact, a study showed that communities that were protected by mangroves and other coastal plants escaped the 2004 tsunami with little damage while neighbouring villages without such protection were completely destroyed. Thus, maintaining biodiversity will not only make ecosystems resilient in the face of a changing climate, it will help moderate climate change and its impacts.

All of you have committed to attaining by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biodiversity. By striving for this goal we will simultaneously bolster our own resistance to the negative effects of climate change. However, none of these goals will be attained unless we further enhance cooperation among the climate change and the biodiversity processes at all levels. To support this integration, the Convention on Biological Diversity, with financial support from the Canadian Government, has developed a web-based *Guidance on the Integration of Biodiversity within Adaptation Planning*. The website brings together tools and information developed by Governments, a variety of organizations and agencies on the integration of biodiversity considerations within adaptation planning.

Numerous environmental organizations, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), share the overarching objective of achieving sustainable development through environmental protection. Mainstreaming their agendas into development policies and planning is therefore yet another imperative for success. Indeed, initiatives that are not coordinated undermine and minimize each others’ positive impact. Moreover, formulating climate-change and biodiversity policies that are fully supportive of developing countries’ aspirations for socio-economic development is a key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and long-term sustainability.

Beyond forests, significant resources are being mobilized for climate-change adaptation and, due to the interconnected nature of all life on Earth, many of these will be directed towards the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. For example, a number of emerging programmes for coral-reef adaptation will contribute to the protection of the valuable ecosystem services provided by these fragile systems. As these new incentives and funding opportunities become available, it is important that lessons learned from the Convention on Biological Diversity are fully integrated and that synergies are maximized in order to enhance cost-effectiveness.

Another policy path that has slowed environmental initiatives has been funding and financing. Collective efforts are needed to generate additional investment and financial flows

that implement practical mitigation and adaptation approaches in concert with effective policies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. There is an urgent need to develop a consistent funding strategy that fully reflects the linkages and potential synergies between the climate change and the biodiversity agendas. As such, I am pleased to report that work is proceeding well under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity to develop a comprehensive strategy for resource mobilization. Informal consultations with Parties to the Convention, public and private funding institutions and initiatives, and relevant stakeholders recently produced one such draft strategy. It considers the full range of possible national, regional and international funding sources, both public and private, and reflects the linkages and potential synergies between climate change and biodiversity. We trust that it will create an effective funding mechanism to support results along several environmental fronts.

Moving to a “*low-carbon/high-biodiversity*” economy will require the integration and mainstreaming both of the climate-change and the biodiversity agendas into relevant economic sectors: energy, transport, forestry, agriculture, and so on. In particular, it will require new and comprehensive efforts to review and reform sector policies and programmes, in dialogue with sector stakeholders and decision makers. In 1987, the Brundtland report *Our Common Future* highlighted that:

“The ability to choose policy paths that are sustainable requires that the ecological dimensions of policy be considered at the same time as the economic, trade, energy, agricultural, industrial, and other dimensions – on the same agendas and in the same national and international institutions. That is the chief institutional challenge of the 1990s.”

This remains a chief institutional challenge today. Indeed, many of the policy paths chosen in the past—and which remain today—have been a hindrance rather than a help.

Ladies and Gentlemen, never before in history have environmental issues received such intense consideration from international organizations. Never before have they been as high on national political agendas as they are today. Climate-change concerns have finally been elevated to the high profile level they require. The momentum has been built, and now environmental organizations must seize this opportunity to convince Governments around the world of the urgency to act not only on climate change, but also on other, equally vital environmental issues—biodiversity loss being key among them. UNEP, as the leading proponent and the authoritative voice of all environmental concerns, is in an ideal position to ensure that this occurs.

In closing I would like to leave you with some thoughts, drawn from Prince Albert II’s investiture speech: “The time for action is today. We already know the future of humanity is at stake. This is a collective responsibility. To tackle this urgent matter, it is necessary to raise awareness, mobilize capacities and revolutionize our lifestyles. This is how we will forge a new relationship with nature.”

I thank you for your attention.

-----