



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



## Message from Dr. Ahmed Djoghla Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

on the occasion of the

### Expert Workshop on Preventing Biological Invasions: Best Practices in Pre-Import Risk Screening for Species of Live Animals in International Trade University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA 9-11 April 2008

The global live animal trade is constantly moving large volumes of thousands of different animal species around the world. This trade contributes to non-native species invasions, a phenomenon cumulatively considered to be a serious factor in the global loss of native biological diversity. Disease risks to humans, domesticated animals and wild animals may be associated with the live animal trade as well. The cost that the world pays for the loss of biodiversity is on the scale of billions of dollars every year – and this only accounts for the known cases. Moreover, this estimate increases when one takes into account the cost of eradication of invasive alien species (IAS) and mitigation of the impacts that they have on endemic species. Clearly, the risks of invasive alien species are substantial. If we are to address these risks, precautionary measures must be considered. If we are to meet the 2010 Biodiversity Target, the spread of IAS must be mitigated.

Thus, it is with great pleasure that I send my greetings to the distinguished participants of the expert workshop, *Preventing Biological Invasions: Best Practices in Pre-Import Risk Screening for Species of Live Animals in International Trade*. The importance of such a workshop is undeniable and indeed, public awareness of these issues needs to be increased. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), together with the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) and the Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) of IUCN's Species Survival Commission as sponsors of this workshop, are working hard to bring the issues of IAS to the fore. I commend the efforts of GISP, ISSG, and my own Secretariat staff colleagues, who also have been ably assisted by the University of Notre Dame, the generous host of this workshop, and by Defenders of Wildlife, a U.S. NGO assisting with planning and organization. The organizers have gathered a top-notch line-up of global expertise on addressing the risks of the international live animal trade. The fascinating topics range from the key biological features of various animal species in risk analysis to economic cost-benefit analysis of pre-import risk screening, and from the role of global information collections to the provisions of international law that may apply.



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This workshop responds to a decision from the CBD's eighth Conference of the Parties that highlights the lack of international guidance for addressing potential risks of international trade in animals that are not plant pests, i.e. species used in aquaculture/mariculture, pets, aquarium and live bait species, and similar animals. I note this is the first global workshop to broadly consider international practices and tools for risk screening for potentially invasive animals. Some of these practices and tools are currently being implemented, while others remain under development. Moreover, there is a wide variance in national capacities and priorities on this issue. As such, this workshop is key to mobilizing networks to provide guidance, support, as well as capacity building, and to prevent, mitigate, and address devastating impacts from IAS.

Two months ago, the thirteenth meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-13) considered the question of international standards that may or may not apply to the live animal trade. A recommendation resulting from SBSTTA-13 specifically highlighted the importance of this workshop. Additionally, this recommendation will be considered during the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP9), which will be held in Bonn, Germany, from 19-30 May, 2008.

Your workshop can play an important role in advancing the CBD's cross cutting issue on invasive alien animal species. I encourage the workshop participants to strive together to enhance international knowledge, information sharing, and capacity in this area. I note and welcome the fact that summarized results of your workshop will be provided to the CBD's in depth review of its work on invasive alien species at COP9 in May, which is little more than one month off.

I finally gratefully note that several organisations and governments have provided funding to support the participation of as many experts as possible. Indeed, many of the CBD's efforts are dramatically strengthened by generous co-sponsors and contributors to such jointly-organized workshops.

I therefore welcome this workshop as a significant aid to the implementation of the CBD programme of work on invasive alien species. I wish you a fruitful meeting and look forward to reading the full report on its outcome.

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