



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity



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

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

AHMED DJOGLAF

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**CONGRESS OF THE CDU/CSU PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF
THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG**

“ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY – CONSERVING CREATION”:

**CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AS A CHALLENGE FOR
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS**

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ONE NATURE · ONE WORLD · OUR FUTURE
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Chancellor Merkel,
President Ravalomanana,
Vice-President Calderón,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is facing an unprecedented loss of biodiversity. Extinction rates have been estimated as much as 1,000 times higher than the typical natural rates over the Earth's history. Every hour four species are lost. Forests are home to about two thirds of all terrestrial species and yet every year 13 million hectares are destroyed—an area about one third the size of Germany. Some 35 per cent of mangroves have been destroyed in the last twenty years, removing natural protection from ocean storms and destroying natural fisheries. Pressure from human activities on the natural functioning of the planet has reached such an extreme that the ability of ecosystems to meet the needs of future generations is now seriously—perhaps irreversibly—jeopardized. As climate change progresses, more and more species and fragile habitats become threatened with extinction. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that up to 30 per cent of all known species may disappear before the end of this century owing to climate change.

While environmental degradation is serious concern, it can be remediated. Species extinction, on the other hand is permanent. What is lost in one country is lost to the world. Biodiversity loss is affecting all continents and all countries, including the most economically advanced ones. Never, since human beings first appeared on Earth, has anthropogenic change to our planet's natural functioning been so destructive as it has been over the last half-century. Never before has Earth witnessed such unparalleled extinction of biodiversity caused by one species. We are facing an unprecedented planetary environmental challenge – one that must be tackled.

Since its first meeting, in Nassau, Bahamas, in December 1994, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has adopted more than 244 decisions relating to the Convention and its Protocol on Biosafety. Three hundred and sixty meetings have been convened. As a result, a vibrant body of policy documents has been agreed upon. Seven programmes of work have been adopted. Key cross-cutting issues have been addressed. A number of principles, guidelines and others tools have been adopted. One hundred and forty Parties have developed national biodiversity strategies and actions plans. Moreover, two years ago, in Curitiba, Brazil, a new phase, one of enhanced implementation of the three objectives of the Convention, was born.

However, while much has been achieved, there is still much to do. In her article in the CBD flagship magazine *Gincana*, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, reminds the international community that:

“Only two years are left to reach the 2010 target of a significant reduction in the loss of biodiversity. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity not only offers us an excellent opportunity but also places us under an obligation to do everything in our power to greatly advance protection of biodiversity throughout the world. This, no more and no less, is about safeguarding the natural resources we need for our

own survival and ensuring that future generations, too, have an opportunity to develop.”

Thus, the Government of Germany, as host of the upcoming ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, has been hard at work in the international arena raising the profile of biodiversity issues. At the Heiligendamm Summit of the G8, Heads of State and Government emphasized, for the first time in the history of the Group, the crucial importance of the conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity as an indispensable basis for the provision of vital ecosystem services for our well-being and the long-term provision of natural resources for the global economy. The Heiligendamm Declaration emerging from the Summit is a historic achievement. It establishes a tradition for future G8 summits. It opens up the possibility for the United States of America to join as a full party in biodiversity family. We sincerely hope that this will happen before 2010 and while Germany is still at the helm as a President of the Conference of the Parties. Thanks to the leadership of the Chancellor of Germany, biodiversity has been elevated to an issue of global concern and is becoming an environmental priority, along side climate change, for world leaders.

In the spirit of further raising the profile of biodiversity loss, the Chancellor of Germany has taken the initiative to convene, for the first time in the history of the Convention, a Heads of State component during the ministerial segment of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It will surely be remembered by generations to come as the Bonn Biodiversity Summit, just as the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro is known as the first Earth Summit. It is also in this spirit that the Bonn meeting is expected to invite the General Assembly of the United Nations to convene in September 2010 a summit of Heads of State and Government exclusively devoted to biodiversity.

Half measures and business as usual are no longer an option when it comes to the unprecedented environmental challenges that the world faces today. Addressing these issues requires a renewed international cooperation at regional and international levels. Under Germany's Triple Presidency (EU, G8 and COP9), a Triple European Presidency for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties has been established between Germany, Portugal and Slovenia. This has never happen before. A precedent has been created and the possibility of establishing a triple COP presidency (COP 9, 10 and 11) is being considered, so as to ensure continuity and substantial progress in the coming years.

The biodiversity challenge also calls for a renewed relation between the North and the South, between providers and users of genetic resources based on solidarity and mutual interests. In March 2006, Germany convened a meeting of the Ministers of the Environment of the G8, together with those from Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. Known as the G8+5 initiative, this was a major and unique development in the Convention process and reflected unprecedented political will to respond to the urgent need to save life on Earth through the establishment of an enhanced North-South partnership. Next month, in Kobe, under the leadership of Japan, this partnership will be extended to include Australia, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea. Through this, the G8+8 global biodiversity partnership between the North and the South will be established.

Another key to tackling the global biodiversity is the new and additional financial resources. In Bonn next month, Germany and its partners will launch the “Life Web Initiative for a Global Campaign on Protected Areas”. Because protected areas are considered “safety-

nets” for life on Earth, this first-ever initiative aims to match voluntary commitments by states with dedicated financing from donors for the designation and maintenance of new protected areas. But protected areas are not only biodiversity safety-nets; evidence shows that they can yield significant benefits that can be translated into cumulative advantages across a national economy. Unfortunately, though, this value is all too often overlooked.

According to the fourth edition of the *Global Environment Outlook* produced by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), one cause of the unprecedented loss of biodiversity is the inability of current policies and economic systems to incorporate the values of biodiversity effectively in either political or market systems. In other cases, where helpful policies that are already in place, often they are yet to be fully implemented. We cannot protect what we do not know, and we cannot protect what we do not value.

It is for this reason that Germany suggested, as part of the Potsdam Initiative, the idea of a Stern-like report for biodiversity. This initiative aims to undertake a “process of analysing the global economic benefit of biological biodiversity, the costs of the loss of biodiversity and the failure to take protective measures versus the cost of effective conservation”. An expert meeting on the Review of the Economics of Biodiversity and Ecosystems Changes (REBEC) was held in Brussels last month under the leadership of Mr. Pavan Sukhdev. The result of the first phase will be presented to the Bonn Biodiversity Conference. I sincerely hope that the final version of Sukhdev report will be launched in early 2010 so as to coincide with the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity and inform the 2010 International Day for Biological Diversity, to be celebrated by the world under the theme “Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation”.

All this being said, while international mobilization is key to creating the political will necessary to achieve the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, all international agreements are only as strong as their parties’ plans for on-the-ground implementation in their own countries. Article 6(a) of the Convention on Biological Diversity calls on all Parties to prepare a national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP). To date, 160 Parties have fulfilled this commitment, and 30 have yet to do so. Moreover, sixteen Parties have revised their NBSAP to integrate relevant targets, including the 2010 biodiversity target. Notably, Germany is one of these few countries.

The adoption in December 2007 of Germany’s national biodiversity strategy is a clear demonstration of Germany strong commitment to the three objectives of the Convention. This was evidenced by the First National Biodiversity Forum, held in Berlin on 5-6 December 2007, with the participation of more than 250 participants representing the different actors, including religious entities, media, NGOs, youth, the business and scientific communities, and the entertainment sector. The strategy contains an explicit vision, action areas, flagship projects and concrete measures on innovation and employment, as well as measures to combat poverty and promote justice, all under the rubric of conservation of biodiversity. It aims not only to implement the Convention at national level, taking fully into account its European commitments, but includes also Germany’s contribution to the protection of biodiversity worldwide. It contains a clear vision for the future with objective, justifiable targets ranging from the immediate action to the year 2050. The strategy has been further elaborated through the convening of seven thematic regional forums involving all 16 Länder, held in Hanover, Munich, Lübbenau, Essen, Schwerin, Stuttgart and Frankfurt. Two other forums are already planned for September 2008

and 2009. The German national biodiversity strategy is a model by its content as well as its approaches.

As mentioned above, an essential part of the effective implementation of the Convention is for Parties to ensure that initiatives stretch across all sectors of a country. Article 6(b) of the Convention, for example, calls for the integration of biodiversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes, and policies. The German biodiversity strategy seeks not only to integrate biodiversity concerns in key economic sectors with the full engagement of the business community but it also aims to combat poverty and achieve justice. It must be noted that biodiversity is indeed key to achieving sustainable development and alleviating poverty. It is for this reason that the 2010 biodiversity target has been integrated into goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals. Hence, I am extremely grateful to the Government of Germany for the memorandum of understanding signed with the Secretariat aimed at promoting an initiative on biodiversity and poverty alleviation, which will complement the initiative launched with the support of the Government of France on biodiversity for development. It is only through mainstreaming biodiversity issues into other issues of global importance that long-lasting change will occur

Consequently, achieving the three objectives of the Convention urgently requires the full engagement of all stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, women, youth and children as well as the scientific community. Again here, Germany has exceeded itself in ensuring the inclusion of all stakeholders in the lead-up to ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The events are numerous, for example:

- Civil society was given the floor during the “100 Days to the UN Biodiversity Conference”, held in Berlin in February at which time they convened an International Dialogue Forum to present their views to the public on the Convention and the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
- Last May, “GENANET” launched a competition called “WomenLiveDiversity” (“FrauenLebenVielfalt”) with a view of sensitizing the public to the issue of biodiversity and gender. Indeed, next month, in Bonn, the Parties will have before them an Action Plan on Gender and Biodiversity prepared by the Secretariat of the CBD in partnership with IUCN. A special meeting of women ministers of the environment on biodiversity will be also convened.
- An international youth conference for the protection of biodiversity “Biodiversity on the Edge” will also be convened just before the Bonn meeting.
- Since we are all working for the sake of nature, Germany has organized a “Naturathlon 2008”. This event will bring together people from as many different countries as possible, in a 10 km race through Bonn’s Rheinaue – Leisure Park, so as to galvanize commitments to the implementation of the objectives of the convention on biological diversity.
- A scientific pre-conference on “Biodiversity research- safeguarding the future” will be also organized with a view of mobilizing the scientific community in support of the Convention’s objectives.

I am very pleased to note that some of our “newest” stakeholders, and indeed champions, of conservation of biodiversity have come from the least likely groups: cities and business. And

yet, in some way, this is not all that surprising. Conservation of biodiversity calls for the full engagement of the business community and a strong business case is urgently required for biodiversity. All businesses, irrespective of their size, location or sector of activity, ultimately depend on biodiversity. Wise management of biodiversity is seen, more and more, as relevant to a company's bottom line performance. Corporate, social and ecological responsibilities, are no longer catchwords, but serve increasingly as indicators for its overall assessment. Under the leadership of the "Triple EU Presidency", the "Message from Lisbon on Business and Biodiversity" adopted by the 500 participants, including 162 representatives of the business community, will be before the ministers attending the Bonn Biodiversity Conference. As part of this engagement, the German Leadership Initiative was launched with the support of more than 20 major German companies. Last week, a conference on business and biodiversity was convened by the Global Nature Fund (GNF) and GTZ with a view of engaging the business community for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. This is the first time that the business community has been drawn into the 2010 challenge, and yet they too are key actors. Indeed, as Chancellor Merkel stated in the Bundestag in March 2007, "ecology and economy are compatible and strategies can be developed which facilitate both economic growth and the creation of jobs while ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably". The REBEC will provide some of the insights necessary to help countries achieve this environmentally sustainable growth.

For the first time in history, the world's urban population now exceeds those living in rural areas. By 2030 two thirds of mankind will be living in cities. There will be more than 150 cities the size of New York, most of them in developing countries. Considering that cities occupy only 2.8 per cent of the Earth's surface yet urban dwellers use 75 per cent of the planet's natural resources, cities will determine the fate of the remaining biodiversity of our planet. There is a strong view that the battle for life on Earth will be won or lost in the cities. Hence, engaging urban centres is essential for the conservation of biodiversity. Based on the conviction that "local authorities move the world", 34 representatives of cities met and adopted in March 2007, the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity. As a follow-up to this, 80 mayors are expected to attend an "International Mayors' Conference on Local Action for Biodiversity" parallel to COP9 – to ensure that as urban centres grow we protect the planet's its incredible wealth of species and ecosystems.

Last year, Sigmar Gabriel, the German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety launched a "National Campaign for Biodiversity". With the support of the "Naturallianz", a group of celebrities from politics, non-governmental organizations, business, the media, cultural groups, and the scientific community, this innovative national campaign aims to promote increased public awareness of the value and benefits of biological diversity and of the upcoming meeting in Bonn. It is our sincere hope to establish in Bonn next month a **"Globale Naturallianz" for life on Earth**

This Global Alliance can not be completed without the engagement of the legislators of the world. The German parliament also has a role to play in promoting the biodiversity agenda at the international level and mobilizing the parliamentarians of the world to act during this enhanced phase of the implementation of the objectives of the Convention. I am pleased to have such a pro-active leader at the helm. A recent case in point of Germany's commitment to environmental protection is the "Meseberg Decisions on Climate Change and Energy Policy"

that was adopted by the German government last December. Parliament is key in translating this policy into law - as is the case with all major policy decisions.

Today's meeting of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group of the German Bundestag under the motto "Assuming Responsibility -- Conserving Creation: Conservation of biodiversity as a challenge for international politics" is a major step in mobilizing the parliamentarians for the implementation of the Convention on Life on Earth. This will certainly be enhanced by the recently published special edition of the journal of the German Bundestag "DAS PARLAMENT" – which I was very pleased to learn about. This special edition focusing on the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the many issues affecting biodiversity today will undoubtedly raise awareness and draw greater attention to biological diversity. In a similar vein, the Federal Environment Committee has decided to hold its regular session on 27 May in Bonn instead of at its usual venue in Berlin. This will enable the German Environment Committee to host a dialogue with all the parliamentarians of the world who will be attending the Bonn Biodiversity Conference. I whole-heartedly welcome this initiative and look forward to its outcomes. Indeed, this may open up the possibility of the adoption of a Bonn Declaration on "Parliamentarians and Biodiversity".

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention will take place at a time of unprecedented environmental challenges. And yet, encouragingly, it also takes place during a time of exceptional public and political awareness of the importance of taking action to protect our environment. It will be held less than two years before the Johannesburg 2010 biodiversity target for achieving a reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss and the 2010 Curitiba commitment for the finalization of the negotiation of the international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). 2010 will be a truly remarkable year for the Convention on Biological diversity. In addition to the two milestones I just mentioned, it is the year when the world will celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity. It is the year when Nagoya, Japan, will host the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Preparing for these milestones is what the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be about. Charting the most direct path between that meeting and these milestones will be the responsibility of each Party, and Germany, as President will be at the helm. Therefore the Bonn Biodiversity Conference will be a pivotal point in the history of the Convention.

As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said: "Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." And indeed Germany has done just that. In the spirit of Goethe, we congratulate you on the convening of this high-level seminar and for bringing together such a diverse and important group of actors, and we thank you for giving us the opportunity to address such an esteemed group just one month before the start of our international meetings in Bonn. I would like to pay tribute to Chancellor Merkel for blessing us with her presence at this meeting as well to Dr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, and also Mr. Francisco Santos Calderón, the Vice-President of Colombia. My presence today with you is meant to convey to all the German people, the German Government, in particular to Minister Gabriel and his team, the gratitude of the Secretariat for their unique contribution in advancing the biodiversity agenda. Just a few months ago, hardly a word about biodiversity could be found in the media, and now not a day goes by that biodiversity is not in the German press. This is truly a remarkable achievement; one that I hope will be replicated around the world.

In June 1995, the ingredients for the Kyoto Protocol on climate change were adopted here in Berlin under the able leadership of Dr. Angela Merkel. We sincerely hope that Bonn Biodiversity Conference will be the cradle of the Nagoya international regime on access and benefit-sharing.

As Albert Einstein said, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” In offering to host the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Germany has moved ahead in promoting fresh thinking, and providing renewed leadership to the world. In my capacity as the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, it is my sincere hope that the Bonn Biodiversity Conference, being held under the motto “One Nature-One World: Our Future” will be remembered by our children as the birthplace of a universal “Globale Naturallianz” for life on Earth with the full and active engagement of all stakeholders.

Vielen herzlichen Dank