



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



Statement from the Executive Secretary

Ahmed Djoghlaif

on the occasion of the

2008 CIC Markhor Award Ceremony for Outstanding Conservation Performance

27 May 2008, Bonn, Germany

Representatives of the Selous-Niassa Wildlife Corridor,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to have been invited to address this diverse audience for the celebration of on-the-ground achievements on sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity. Unfortunately, due to my commitments to the current Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), I cannot be with you this evening. Nevertheless, I wish to express my enthusiasm and support for the work, not only of the recipients of the 2008 CIC Markhor Award, but also that of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) itself.

Global biodiversity has both tremendous intrinsic and instrumental value for which substitutes cannot easily be found, if at all. The annual world fish catch is estimated to be worth US\$58 billion. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that at least 40 per cent of our global economy is based on the use of biological resources. In low-income countries, natural capital constitutes about 26 per cent of their total wealth. Worldwide, forests provide an estimated 1.6 billion people with everyday needs such as food, shelter, energy, and recreation, while an estimated 300 million people, most of them poor, depend substantially on forest biodiversity, including non-wood forest products, for their subsistence and survival, including around 150 million people belonging to indigenous groups.

Consider also the role of biodiversity in cultural diversity. Nature shapes each one of its denizens. It provides opportunities for observation and education, recreation and enjoyment. In certain communities, the environment underpins the very structure of social relations. However, as species disappear so too do social traditions and ecological knowledge. Indeed, those living in the Selous-Niassa Wildlife Corridor can tell us first-hand about the multi-faceted value of nature in their lives.

And yet, our use of these natural resources has caused more damage in the last fifty years than in the whole of human history. We cannot afford to continue on this destructive path.

The sustainable use of renewable biological resources is one of best ways to ensure the continued conservation of biological diversity. Nature provides and sustains our very existence, and unless we value the benefits we derive from the use of biological resources, we risk losing them entirely – intrinsic value, cultural value. Indeed, the lessons derived from experiences of sustainable usage can be applied to all economic activities, including agriculture and livestock management, forestry, fisheries, and yes, even hunting and hunting tourism.

As populations expand and begin to encroach on natural habitats, increasing occurrences of human-wildlife conflict, achieving sustainability becomes more and more challenging but at the same time increasingly vital if



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we are to ensure that our use today does not compromise the use of those resources tomorrow. To this end, the Addis Ababa Principals & Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity were established and adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2004. The use and application of these principals and guidelines helps us move closer to the goal of sustainability by providing guidance for the development of practical indicators for the monitoring of sustainable use.

The CBD Secretariat is heartened and welcomes the efforts of organizations like the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation to work towards carrying out the objectives of the Convention and supporting the goals of sustainable development.

The *CIC Markhor Award for Outstanding Conservation Performance Through Sustainable Use* is a unique award, in that it recognizes and celebrates the efforts of personalities, institutions and conservation projects who and which link the conservation of biodiversity and human livelihoods through the application of the principles of sustainable use including hunting.

Furthermore, the award is very special as it sets as a standard the successful work of the Torghar Conservation Project in Pakistan. The design of this project was based on the principles of sustainable use, local tribal involvement and conservation biology. Populations of the *Sulaiman Markhor* -- the beautiful animal featured on the programme cover this evening -- have increased, after more than 20 years, from a critical level to healthy and stable populations thanks to sustainable hunting tourism and community conservation efforts.

A key to achieving long-lasting change, and one of the most important activities of the CBD, is to raise awareness of the significance and feasibility of sustainable use on the global scale. The CIC Markhor Award helps achieve this by recognizing projects and communities who have brought into the centre of their activities the Addis Ababa principles.

Following in the footsteps of the Torghar project, the local communities and conservation bodies of southern Tanzania and Northern Mozambique have been working together and across boundaries to conserve their biodiversity, and thus ensure their livelihoods by recognizing that the use of resources is the only way to conserve those resources for future generations. This does not only safeguard biodiversity, but it strengthens at the same time peace and stability in a once troubled part of the world. Indeed, as Professor Wangari Maathai noted during her acceptance of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, "There can be no peace without equitable development and there can be no development without sustainable management of the environment in a democratic and peaceful space. I hope that this prize will help many people see the link between peace, development and environment."

Therefore, we have come together on this occasion to recognize the hard work and efforts of the many people who inhabit one of Africa's last, great wildernesses in the Selous-Niassa area. What is lost in one country in this region is lost to the world. Thus, each country has a vested interest in reducing loss of biodiversity. But more than this, and in the spirit of international cooperation, governmental and non-governmental organisations should reach out to assist those countries least capable of adapting to the impacts of climate change. The CIC is a leader in supporting this type of cooperation and this year's award winners are proof that it is possible for humans to live in harmony with nature.

As the theme of COP 9 highlights, we truly are One Nature, One World, One Future. Indeed, the communities of Tanzania, Mozambique and Pakistan have inspired us all by living up to this motto.

Congratulations to all of you for your commitment and achievements, and I wish you continued success.
