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**Convention on Biological Diversity**



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AND AGRICULTURE**

Statement from

**Ahmed Djoghla**  
**Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological  
Diversity**

on the occasion of the

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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)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know the statistics: as of 2007, 50 per cent of the world population lives in cities, and this number is growing. While the urban centres occupy only 2 per cent of the Earth's area, they dictate 75 per cent of the use of the world's natural resources. In addition, we are overusing Earth's limited resources: on average, half-a-hectare of productive ecosystems is necessary to sustain the needs of a resident of a developing country, more than five hectares are needed to satisfy the ever-growing consumption requirements of citizens of the world's richest countries. This sobering statement has been confirmed by the fourth edition of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO4), recently released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It demonstrates that Humanity's footprint is 21.9 hectares per person while the Earth's biological capacity is, on average, only 15.7 hectares per person. Last May, WWF released its Living Planet Index, a unique measure of the state of the world's biodiversity. It tracks nearly 4,000 animal populations and shows a frightening overall decline of 27 per cent. It shows also that populations of tropical terrestrial species appear to have declined by 46 per cent. Indeed, 80 per cent of the biodiversity of our planet is located in tropical forests and yet 13 million hectares of forest are lost every year. The pressures exerted on the planet's natural functions by human activity have reached such a level that the ability of ecosystems to meet the needs of future generations is now seriously, and perhaps irretrievably, compromised. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), up to 30 per cent of all known species may disappear before the end of this century owing to climate change.

At the Arthur M. Sackler Colloquia of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, held in December 2007, participants have argued that humanity is in the midst of the sixth global mass extinction of species. Two biologists of the University of Stanford in California, Paul R. Ehrlich and Robert M. Pringle, suggested that "The fate of biological diversity for the next 10 million years will almost certainly be determined during the next 50–100 years by the activities of a single species...*Homo sapiens*." Ensuring the future of biodiversity requires the engagement of all States and all citizens of the world. It calls for a new era of coexistence between man and Nature. Our lives and livelihoods depend on us and the development of a new relationship with Nature, or indeed re-learning an old one, so that we can maintain our well-being and grow in a sustainable manner, rather than at the expense of Nature.

To achieve this, national governments and NGOs count more and more on the contribution of local governments. In so many cases, conservation activities require the full participation and cooperation of local authorities and populations to even let them come into being, let alone ensure success. A IUCN survey of 220 relevant governments, NGOs, academia and other categories revealed that:

- o 47 per cent already engage local authorities in their biodiversity projects, and 75 per cent say their future projects will include local authorities.
- o When asked in which fields of IUCN's work local authorities are most relevant (out of the whole range of MDG goals), the winners were ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation and protected areas - all clearly linked to CBD processes.

For this reason, IUCN is in a unique position with local and regional authorities; much can be achieved through enhanced collaboration with these groups. Indeed local and regional authorities. These groups are key to creating enabling situations so as to encourage its citizens to consume in a more ecologically friendly manner; a small change in the way 50 per cent of the world's population live will go a long way to reducing the proportion of our planet's resources that are used. Many local authorities have joined the IUCN's Countdown 2010 campaign. IUCN, who commemorates its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, here in Barcelona, is and has been an invaluable supporting partner in the implementation of the CBD since our foundation in 1992. I look forward to continuing our joint efforts to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Target, and to make the International Year for Biodiversity in 2010 a milestone in achieving our common goals.

I sincerely thank the organizations that have been working with us towards the achievement of these goals for many years already, such as ICLEI and IUCN's Countdown 2010, UNEP's Urban

Environment Unit, UNESCO and UN-HABITAT, as well as the local authorities that have already stepped-up to the plate: Mayor Richa (Curitiba), Mayor Tremblay (Montreal), Lady Mayor Bärbel Dieckmann, (Bonn), and Mayor Takehisa Matsubara of Nagoya. It is no coincidence that these mayors represent cities that have hosted meetings of the Conference of the Parties, however, this list is not and should not be restricted to this group. Indeed Singapore has been trail blazing, both in practice on the ground in its own city, but also on the international stage to raise awareness about the valuable contribution of urban biodiversity to local, regional, and indeed global well-being of all species, not just *Homo sapiens*.

Two main lessons emerged from our cities and biodiversity initiative:

First, biodiversity renders essential services to cities. The environment provides food, freshwater, and medicine. It also supports livelihoods, notably in developing countries, as well as major economic industries, such as fishing, agriculture, and tourism. Moreover, it provides essential services such as erosion control, climate regulation, pollution control, flood regulation, disease regulation, nutrient cycling, pest regulation, carbon sequestration, and air quality regulation. Last but not least, nature contributes to the quality of life of urban citizens by offering places for recreation, for both body and mind. In addition, its aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural values are indisputable. In 2003, the eThekweni Municipality of Durban (South Africa) valued environmental goods and services at R3.1 billion (1US\$=R8) per annum (excluding the contribution to the tourism sector, which is R3.5 billion per annum). Concerning climate regulation, for instance, hourly monitoring of temperature levels in Nagoya (Japan) allowed the city to demonstrate that forest cover is essential for keeping temperatures at lower levels. Nagoya's reforestation programme has been proven to reduce day temperatures by up to 4 degrees Celsius. Sao Paulo observed a difference of 8 degrees Celsius between forested and non-forested areas. In addition, urban planning is one of the key strategies in the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity. Dr. Jaime Lerner, urban planner and former Mayor of Curitiba stated that "cities are not the problem, they are the solution". They can develop programmes, projects and legislation that integrate biodiversity concerns into urban planning. The cities' jurisdiction encompasses several sectors of vital importance to sustainable development, such as waste management and transportation. The groundbreaking US\$ 175 million "BioCity" programme, launched by the City of Curitiba, constitutes a concrete example of urban planning that takes into consideration biodiversity-related issues.

This past May, at the Bonn Biodiversity Summit, Minister Mah Bow Tan, the Minister for National Development of Singapore, joined the mayors of Curitiba, Bonn, Montreal and Nagoya as steering committee of the Cities and Biodiversity Initiative launched in Curitiba, in March 2007, when 34 mayors adopted the "Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity" and reaffirmed their determination to integrate biodiversity concerns into urban planning and their commitment to actively contribute to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention - in particular, Singapore offered to help develop a city biodiversity index that would help all levels of government to benchmark and evaluate the performance of cities in implementing the Convention.

In Bonn, this past May, fifty mayors, from 30 countries, representing over 100 million urban dwellers met under the theme "Local Action for Biodiversity" to underline the importance of urban biodiversity. The resulting "Bonn Call for Action" was submitted to the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held with the participation of Heads of State and Governments and more than 100 ministers of the environment. For the first time ever in any United Nations environmental convention, cities spoke at the highest-level forum, thus setting a precedent for future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and other related intergovernmental processes.

At the same time, 400 scientists, planners and other practitioners adopted the Erfurt Declaration "Urbio 2008" at the first ever international conference on Networking, Urban ecology, Urban biodiversity and design for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Towns and Cities. As a

result, the 5,000 participants at the Bonn meeting, representing 191 Parties, adopted for the first time a decision on cities and biodiversity—decision IX/28.

This decision encourages Parties to recognize the role of cities in national strategies and plans, and invites Parties to support and assist cities in implementing the Convention at a local level. Indeed, one of the greatest achievements of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was the recognition that the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity requires the full engagement of cities and local authorities. To this end, a plan of action on cities and biodiversity will be submitted to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in the city of Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, in October 2010 at the occasion of the celebration of the International Year on Biodiversity. A Nagoya Summit on Cities and biodiversity will also be convened.

Today, I am pleased to take part, along with IUCN, ICLEI, UCLG, UNEP's Urban Environment Unit and UN-HABITAT, in the launch of the Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity. The establishment of a Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity was proposed during the Curitiba Meeting on Cities and Biodiversity, in March 2007, to support cities in the sustainable management of their biodiversity resources, to assist cities to implement practices that support national, regional and international strategies, plans, and agendas on biodiversity, and to learn from existing initiatives. This was re-iterated at the Bonn UN Biodiversity Summit in May 2008. The time is now ripe to formally launch a Global Partnership on Cities and Biodiversity in order to mobilize a network of cities for the UN International Year on Biodiversity, in 2010, where the next UN Summit will take place, in Oct 2010, in Nagoya, Japan.

The objectives of the Convention will be achieved only when the value of biodiversity, including its non-monetary components and the ecosystem services generated, is well understood by the public and fully integrated into decision making at all levels. This necessitates the engagement of all stakeholders: the business community; scientists; youth; women; non-governmental organizations; indigenous communities; parliamentarians; cities, and the list goes on. Moreover, it requires integrating biodiversity and ecosystem-services considerations into land-use policy and planning, agricultural, forestry, fisheries and tourism policies, scientific agendas, and into trade and development-cooperation policies.

By raising awareness locally, we underline the link between humans and nature, and remind city dwellers that they are inextricably linked to the natural world that they seem so far removed from but on which their choices have tremendous impacts, and upon which they rely for their well-being.

As Spanish artist Pablo Picasso once said, "Action is the foundational key to all success." Let us ensure future success in conservation of biological diversity and indeed the well-being of all life on Earth by taking action here at the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

Thank you for your kind attention.