



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



Message from the Executive Secretary

Ahmed Djoghlaif

To the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) Changwon, Republic of Korea, 28 October - 4 November 2008

Your Excellency President Lee, Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates and participants,

It is an honour and a privilege to be able to address this important meeting.

I would like to convey warm-hearted congratulations to the Government of the Republic of Korea from Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, who was not able to join this important meeting due to his commitments at the UN General Assembly meeting. Particularly, he expresses his sincere apology to His Excellency President Lee for missing this valuable opportunity to meet with His Excellency in person and learn his insights and wisdom. Recognizing Korea's successful implementation of wetland conservation policy in the past decade since the enactment of the Wetland Conservation Act in 1999, the CBD Secretariat finds that it very timely that this meeting is hosted by Korea so that all the Parties and partners to the Ramsar Convention can benefit from the profound experiences and expertise of Korean efforts, in particular regarding how Korean people have balanced and harmonized the strong pressure of economic development with the need for maintaining ecological integrity and biodiversity values of their wetlands.

The theme for the tenth meeting of this body ("Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People") resonates strongly with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as we continue to promote the role of biodiversity in the delivery of ecosystem services in order to sustain and improve human well-being.

The good collaboration between our two conventions is well known and the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, held in Curitiba, Brasil, in March 2006, recognized that this relationship sets a good example in building synergies between conventions to effectively deliver common and mutually reinforcing objectives.

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, held in Bonn in May this year, endorsed the CBD-Ramsar joint work programme as revised through to 2010. This captures a renewed vision of how we shall work together towards meeting the requirements of our respective COP's and places strong emphasis on the need to move implementation forward



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through increased communication, education and public awareness, engaging major stakeholders and improved capacity-building. CBD COP 9 also welcomed the work and contributions of the Ramsar Convention in many areas and in particular reiterated its role as the lead implementation partner for wetlands by, amongst other things, inviting this auspicious body to consider appropriate action on the very important and urgent issue of wetlands, water, biodiversity and climate change. There are win-win opportunities in this arena to not only protect wetland ecosystems and the biodiversity they harbour – but to use these more proactively and wisely to contribute significantly to meeting multiple human development challenges in the face of a rapidly changing world.

The United Nations General assembly has designated 2010 as the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity. I cordially invite all governments and organizations present to commence preparations for this important event. In the same year the Government of Japan will host the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD. This milestone presents the opportunity to not only reflect on what we have achieved in relation to the 2010 target but more importantly to set out our vision and goals for the future. In this process the contributions of the Ramsar Convention have been and will be critical. You are a true partner in the fullest sense. We have the opportunity to showcase how well we have worked together and lay down our road map beyond 2010. I have no doubts that this will be achieved and that together we can set the bar even higher for collaboration towards our shared vision.

I wish you a successful meeting and assure you of my strongest commitment to our partnership.
