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Convention on Biological Diversity



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**BIODIVERSITY
AND AGRICULTURE**

**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
DR. AHMED DJOGLAF**

on the occasion of the

**FIRST MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON
BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

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ONE NATURE · ONE WORLD · OUR FUTURE
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Ladies and gentlemen,

The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that between 20 and 30 per cent of assessed species will face increased risks of extinction if temperatures increase by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is equally clear; climate change is emerging as one of the most significant threats to biodiversity.

Yet, even as countries respond to the impacts of climate change through adaptation and mitigation activities, their actions have an impact on biodiversity.

Efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation have the potential to contribute significantly to CBD efforts towards the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity. On the other hand, some afforestation projects involve the planting of monocultures of invasive species, such as eucalyptus, at the expense of native species in grasslands and agricultural landscapes.

As another example, the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation identifies Integrated Marine and Coastal Zone Management as a key adaptation tool and, as such, is serving to mobilize additional financial resources and political commitments to this end. On the other hand, the dredging of reefs and vulnerable coastal ecosystems in order to build artificial sea walls is an adaptation activity that is resulting in the destruction of critical ecosystems that provide food and raw materials to a number of coastal peoples.

In response to the above, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-9) recognized the urgent need for action on climate change. It called for the convening of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) to bring together some of the world's foremost experts on climate change and biodiversity. The objective of the AHTEG is to provide biodiversity-relevant information to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the provision of scientific and technical advice and assessment on the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

In this first meeting, you will focus on two key challenges: (1) identifying the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, including recognizing vulnerable components of biodiversity, and (2) further elaborating the positive and negative links between biodiversity and climate change mitigation.

Your deliberations over the next five days will form a critical contribution to the evolving processes under the UNFCCC; helping to build efficient carbon markets and effective response mechanisms.

The text of the UNFCCC outlines its objective: the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system ... within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change.

It is clear now that this objective cannot be met, due in part to the anticipated impacts of a two degree Celsius temperature increase on biodiversity, and in part to the many other pressures biodiversity is facing. As such, you have an important task ahead of you, to define a new balance and a new synergy between what are, perhaps, the two greatest environmental challenges facing the World today. You represent expertise from all regions of the world; you are agronomists, biologists, economists, and foresters; you hold positions in governments, universities, United Nations agencies, NGOs and IGOs.

I have no doubt that under the able chairmanship of Dr. Bob Watson, and thanks to the financial support of Belgium, Denmark, the Flemish Government and the United Kingdom, you will help build a better understanding of the links between biodiversity and climate change.

I wish you the best of luck in your deliberations.
