



Secretariat of the  
**Convention on Biological Diversity**



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

**OPENING REMARKS**

on behalf of the

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

at the

**REGIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP  
FOR THE PACIFIC ON NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES,  
BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING AND THE  
INTEGRATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

2 February 2009, Nadi, Fiji



ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE  
COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008



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*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Good Morning. I am very pleased to be with you all in this beautiful country of Fiji, and to add my welcome to the regional capacity development workshop on national biodiversity strategies, biodiversity mainstreaming and the integration of climate change.

First of all, on behalf of Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, I would like to thank our partners in the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the South Pacific Community and the Department for the Environment of Fiji, for co-sponsoring this workshop

I would like to underline our appreciation to the Fiji Department of the Environment for their support despite the demands on the department to deal with the aftermath of the recent floods.

My special thanks go to the dedicated staff of SPREP and IUCN, for all their help, support and advice in organizing this workshop.

I would like to note that today we are celebrating World Wetlands Day. This year's theme "*Upstream. downstream, wetlands connects us all*", resonates very well with the CBD and its ecosystem approach, and provides a perfect context for our discussions here this week.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In eighteen months, in October 2010, the Conference of the Parties will hold its tenth meeting in Nagoya, Japan to review progress towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target. As you all know, the target agreed by the Conference of Parties in 2002, is to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biodiversity as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to benefit all life on earth.

This is an enormous challenge. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment concluded that unprecedented efforts are required to achieve the 2010 target globally. The MA also noted that the loss of biodiversity and decline of ecosystem services threatens to undermine progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. And it is important to underline that we are not only talking about Goal 7 on sustainable development. Biodiversity and the ecosystem services that it underpins are also essential for food security, nutrition and health. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is thus an essential part of strategies to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, the biodiversity target has now been integrated into the MDG framework.

Among the threats to biodiversity, climate change is increasing in importance. And this is particularly so for small island states such as those here in the Pacific. Effective action to mitigate and adapt to climate change must become integrated with our efforts to protect biodiversity

In this context, the importance of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) is clear. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention has emphasised that NBSAPs constitute the cornerstone of national implementation and thus, the Convention requires all Parties to develop and submit NBSAPs.

I am pleased to note that most countries present here have completed and adopted their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and the others have them under development. But of course we know that this is but one step in the implementation of the Convention. Regularly updating an NBSAP is an activity essential to ensuring that it responds to the evolving workplan of the Convention as well as changes within a country, and to new threats such as climate change. NBSAPs must be implemented. And they must become tools for integrating biodiversity into decision making across all departments of government and all sectors of society and the economy. This will require greater emphasis on communication, education and public awareness.

Regional policies also have an important role to play and that is why we are very pleased to be working with SPREP in this workshop and other capacity development workshops and why we shall shortly be concluding an MOU between our two secretariats.

This workshop is the tenth in a series being organized by the Secretariat and our partners on NBSAPs, and the second to incorporate a special session on climate change. The earlier workshops demonstrate a high degree of commitment by focal points to implement the Convention.

Through these workshops, the CBD Secretariat aims to promote the exchange of experiences among countries in the development and implementation of NBSAPs and biodiversity mainstreaming, and to identify case studies of best practice. The workshops will also help the Conference of Parties be better informed of the progress -- and obstacles to progress -- on the ground in countries and thus to refine its future work programme. We look forward to learning from the experiences of all countries in this region. In particular, we will draw upon from the expertise of the communities, universities, institutions and governments of the region.

Effective NBSAPs, supported by effective communication, are key to meeting the challenge of reducing biodiversity loss by 2010 and beyond and to contributing to the most important goal of all: the eradication of poverty. This week provides an opportunity for us to work to make those NBSAPs more effective.

I encourage you all to participate actively in and contribute to all the discussions in the workshop and trust that it will be productive and successful.

Thank you for your kind attention.