



Convention on
Biological Diversity



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

22 MAY 2009

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

**STATEMENT BY AHMED DJOGHLAF
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

at the

OPENING SESSION

of the

**SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON
ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING**

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

2 April 2009

Please check against delivery



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



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

Distinguished Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing,
Distinguished Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences of UNESCO
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to extend to you all a very warm welcome to the seventh meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, which is a key meeting on our common journey to Nagoya. The leadership of the two Co-Chairs of the Working Group, the German Presidency of the Conference of the Parties and the other members of the Bureau deserve special recognition. The letter addressed last week by the President of the Conference of the Parties, Mr. Gabriel Sigmar, to all ministers in charge of access and benefit-sharing is a strong and timely message of high political significance.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Spain and Sweden for their financial support for the organization of this meeting. I also wish to thank Germany, Norway and Spain for their support for the participation of representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. As we all know, a fair and balanced participation for all regions is essential to the success of this endeavour.

Our gratitude also goes to the Executive Director and to UNEP for their leadership and active involvement in support of the process of developing an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. UNEP contributed to and participated in the two expert meetings held in recent months. Moreover, UNEP provided the financial support for the commissioning of the five studies requested by the Conference of the Parties, which are before this meeting today. Finally, UNEP's commitment to organizing regional consultations is another key contribution to the negotiation of the international regime.

I also wish to express my deep appreciation to UNESCO for hosting this meeting and for doing the utmost to accommodate our needs even as it is hosting the spring session of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as well as other events in this very busy period.

UNESCO and the CBD have a long history of collaboration beginning in the early 1990s, when the text of the Convention was being developed. From the inception of the Convention, UNESCO has been a key and reliable partner in the implementation of many of the Convention's work programmes, including through the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the World Heritage Convention and its work on environmental education, and later on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Further collaboration is currently being discussed, notably within the context of the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. It is therefore fitting that this meeting takes place at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

Meeting in this much revered building reminds us of the multidimensional nature of the issue of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing and its

relevance to UNESCO's own mandate. By facilitating access to genetic resources and providing a basis for enhanced cooperation between providers and users of genetic resources a successful international regime stands to make a significant contribution to the advancement of science for the benefit of humankind. It also stands to promote the greater use and dissemination of traditional knowledge.

The UNESCO premises are also a source of inspiration to us all given the international flavour of this unique building and its collection of works of art of famous artists from around the world. As this meeting is a major step on our common journey to Nagoya, participants will find special inspiration in the Garden of Peace and the Peace Fountain, by Isamu Noguchi, also called the Japanese Garden, which was brought from Japan as a gift to UNESCO in 1958, when the building was constructed.

The meditation space by Tadao Ando or the Nagasaki Angel may also provide a most valuable resource in the more challenging moments of this meeting.

Distinguished Co-Chairs and delegates,

This meeting is a pivotal juncture in the negotiation of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing. We must make meaningful advances on this road to Nagoya. We must plant the seeds of change—the seeds of peace with nature—in the minds of all actors so that in October 2010, we can present to the world the Nagoya International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing.

This requires that significant progress be made, here in Paris, in our common journey to Nagoya. As Victor Hugo once said, “*Vouloir toujours; c'est le fait de Paris*”. I invite you to keep these wise words in mind during your negotiations in the coming days.

I invite you also to keep in mind the words of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai, who stated that, “*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.*”

The mandate of this Working Group emphasizes this link, and its successful implementation will bring the world one step closer to peace and shared prosperity through global solidarity.

Albert Einstein once said, “*Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.*” And this thought is reflected in the wisdom of the founding fathers of our host institution, who wrote into the UNESCO Constitution that “*since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed*”. Likewise, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace with nature must be raised.

This is why you are here today. You are here today to create the tool to achieve this and build the foundation of the Nagoya International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing. Let your efforts in the coming days be transformed into a vehicle for respect for nature and facilitating environmental stewardship and peace: a tool for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. In doing so, you can always rely on the full support of your Secretariat.

Thank you for your attention.
