



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity



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

at the

OPENING SESSION

of the

SECOND MEETING

of the

**SECOND AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON
BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

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Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

The first meeting of this Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change (AHTEG), held in London from 17 to 21 November 2008, brought to light some of the key links between climate change and biodiversity. Scientific evidence points to the importance of maintaining natural ecosystems, including their genetic and species diversity, if we are to succeed in meeting the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is to stabilize greenhouse-gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

The first AHTEG meeting also emphasized the need for urgent action, as climate change is projected to increase species extinction rates, with approximately 10 per cent of the species assessed so far at an increasingly high risk of extinction for every 1°C rise in global mean surface temperature. This trend is expected to hold true up to at least a 5°C increase in temperature, which would result in about 50 per cent of species facing increased risks of extinction. These projections represent a staggeringly persuasive argument for acting now to limit greenhouse-gas emissions and maximize the adaptive capacity of ecosystems so that they can continue to provide the services that are essential for life on Earth.

As such, the work that this AHTEG will undertake with regard to the links between biodiversity, climate-change adaptation and climate-change-related risks and vulnerability is of the utmost importance. The policy-relevant input you will provide to the UNFCCC process under the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, and to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, will help to shape future actions.

It is perhaps fitting that you will be conducting your work in Helsinki, a city whose close links to the Arctic enable it to see already the impacts of climate change. The Arctic is warming at a rate almost double that of the rest of the world, and, while we are seeing declines in populations of Arctic waterfowl and cold-water fish, we are also seeing species moving north to inhabit areas formerly beyond their reach. This dichotomy is only one indication of the complexity of the issues you will be addressing over the coming week.

Given the strength of expertise gathered here, thanks to the financial support of our hosts, the Government of Finland, I have no doubt, that you will help build a better understanding of the links between biodiversity and climate change. The outcomes of your work will feature as an important draft report that will be submitted to the thirtieth meeting of the subsidiary bodies to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for consideration during the important negotiations leading to the United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen in December this year.

I thank you for your attention and wish you the best in your deliberations.
