



**MESSAGE BY DR. AHMED DJOGLAF
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

on the occasion of

**WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2009
Barriers to Migration
9 – 10 May 2009**

Once again it is spring in Montreal. Here, the return of many Canadian birds from their winter sojourns is a comforting reminder of the changing seasons, the resilience of nature and the inter-connectedness of our planet. Canadian geese are the most prominent recent new arrivals to our skies, accompanied in no less important ways by many other species. We look forward to the hummingbirds which, despite their small and delicate nature, travel thousands of kilometres and will shortly be around again to remind us that the summer is fully upon us.

We owe these birds a moment to reflect on what they have to endure on their travels. We continue to place more and more obstacles in their way – as if natural hazards were not enough. We propagate their routes with a multitude of man-made barriers – wind turbines, power lines, radio/television/microwave masts and tall buildings which, if they are lucky, they must navigate around. Glass windows are everywhere and fool them into making fatal turns. This year's theme for World Migratory Bird Day – “Barriers to Migration” – draws our attention to the need to be more sensitive about how we shape the landscape, which is not ours alone.

Migratory birds are one of the most prominent and best monitored species groups and good indicators for the status and trends of wider biodiversity loss. They play an important role not only in sustaining our environment but also in monitoring changes in it. And, despite improvements in the prospects of some species, the trends in far too many continue to tell us that we are not responding to the biodiversity crisis well enough.

We applaud the efforts of many in this area of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The Convention on Biological Diversity is a mechanism for mainstreaming these concerns and activities across the broader international arena. An example of complementary activities from our side is the progress our Parties are making globally with the establishment of a representative network of protected areas, including, *inter alia*, taking into account, the requirements of migratory species, under the auspices of the Convention's programme of work on protected areas. Through such initiatives we can ensure, by working together, that birds not only encounter fewer barriers on their way, but continue to have a sustained environment at their arrival and departure points, as well as staging posts along their way.

Montreal, 8 May 2008