



**MESSAGE of AHMED DJOGHLAF
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY of the
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
on the occasion of WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2009**

As Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, I welcome the theme of this year's World Environment Day. Life on Earth would be impossible without the rich array of species and ecosystems that we have inherited. Accordingly, climate change and biodiversity loss are closely interconnected: climate change is affecting all life on Earth, leading to a vicious circle, whereby anthropogenic pollution of our atmosphere limits the capacity of the Earth's natural ecosystems to function and, consequently, reduces their resilience to the consequences of climate-change.

The next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC represents an opportunity for the further recognition of the importance of the services delivered by healthy, intact ecosystems for climate-change adaptation as this will profoundly affect societal adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Many countries have already recognized that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is crucial to their national adaptation plans.

The target for emissions reductions set in Copenhagen will directly dictate the extent of additional pressure that will be placed on biodiversity, the foundation of life on Earth. For example, if the emissions reduction target is set such that a 2°C rise is expected, 20% of species will face increased risks of extinction. If the emissions reduction target is set such that a 5°C rise is expected, the number increases to 50% of species facing increased risks of extinction. As a result of climate change, up to 88% of reefs in South-East Asia may be lost over the next 30 years.

The Copenhagen discussions on mitigation activities have the potential to yield significant positive benefits for biodiversity. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) has the potential to deliver significant co-benefits for forest biodiversity if mechanisms are designed appropriately. This means: recognizing the contribution of diverse forests to long-term carbon sequestration; considering the rights of indigenous and local communities and addressing important forest governance issues such as illegal logging.

We're in this together. We need our planet and our planet needs us!

Montreal, 5 June 2009

