



MESSAGE
BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DR. AHMED DJOGLAF
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES,
9 AUGUST 2009

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples honours the contributions made by indigenous peoples to sustaining life on Earth. Indigenous peoples have a special relationship with nature in general and biodiversity in particular, which makes them crucial partners of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Indigenous peoples are stewards of the Earth's biological diversity and their diverse cultures and languages are the pillars of humanity's cultural diversity. This is especially true for indigenous women, who play a vital role in language transmission (mother-tongue), the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and in acting as guardians of traditional knowledge, and treasure keepers of seeds for their communities.

This event provides me with an opportunity to raise awareness of important activities being planned by the Secretariat of the Convention, in partnership with indigenous peoples to celebrate 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity.

In decision IX/13 E, Parties to the Convention requested Governments and relevant international organizations in collaboration with the Executive Secretary, through the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) to develop, including in local languages, alternative means of communicating public information on traditional knowledge related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in order to ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, including women and youth, at local, national and international levels, while supporting the development by indigenous and local communities of their own media tools. Furthermore decision IX/13 I, requests the Executive Secretary to draw attention to the important role of indigenous and local communities in activities related to 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, and to cooperate closely with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to explore opportunities for common activities as related to information exchange and awareness-raising under the guidance of the Bureau.

The Secretariat is pursuing this work in earnest and has developed a menu of activities including:

1. Animation for use on television, airlines, screen-savers, etc.;
2. Community-based short film/video in indigenous and local communities, traditional knowledge and biodiversity;
3. A photographic exhibition for installation from April to August 2010 at United Nations Headquarters;
4. UNESCO traditional knowledge posters partnership – translated into diverse languages;



5. Community radio stories and interviews translated into diverse languages;
6. Partnership with an indigenous media initiative - www.indigenousportal.com, to improve related sections of their web-pages;
7. Participation Guide for indigenous and local community representatives for effective participation in CBD processes (multiple-languages) developed as training materials;
8. Editions four and five of the Article 8(j) Newsletter, *Pachamama*, in English, Spanish, and French.

Further to this, the Secretariat has commenced developing these materials in close consultation with the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties and the indigenous working group on CEPA and expects to have products finalized towards the end of this year.

These products will have two focuses: firstly, materials for indigenous and local communities to raise their awareness about the Convention and to encourage their effective participation in Convention processes and secondly materials for the general public to raise their awareness of the important role of indigenous and local communities and their traditional knowledge in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In partnership with the indigenous working group on CEPA, the Secretariat is advancing plans to ensure these materials are widely disseminated and show-cased at high profile events in 2010, including, the opening of the International Year of Biodiversity in Berlin, in January 2010; the ninth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in New York, April, 2010; the Global Conference on Cultural and Biological Diversity for Development, in Montreal, in July 2010; the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. I am hoping that as many of you as possible will join us on these important occasions.

I wish all indigenous peoples of the world a memorable celebration of this International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and take this opportunity to invite you to be our partner in preparing for the International Year of Biodiversity, so that we can highlight and celebrate the important role of indigenous and local communities and your traditional knowledge, in addressing the grave issues currently facing humanity.

Montreal, 08 August 2009