



STATEMENT BY

MR. AHMED DJOGLAF

**THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE CANADIAN UNVEILING OF THE LOGO FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY**

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MONTREAL



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ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Marlene Dietrich once said: “Canada, what a beautiful country! The air and the sky look as though they have been cleaned and polished, and the people too.” The 80-strong staff of this unique convention have the same feeling in the day-to-day conduct of their work. Indeed, the Secretariat of the only Rio convention located in North America has benefited at all times from the unconditional and constant support of the Canadian federal authorities, as well as that of the government and people of Quebec and the City of Montréal in particular.

Since its establishment in January 1996, thirteen years ago, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which we affectionately call the Convention for Life on Earth, has found in the City of Montreal, its country Canada and its people, a truly hospitable family, attentive to its growth and protective of its development.

It is therefore in the natural order of things, or should I say the Montreal order of things, that at a time when the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is preparing the celebration of the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity, a unique event in the life of the United Nations, it should be accompanied, even supported by, its Canadian partners and the City of Montreal.

In his message to the 193 Parties to the Convention, published in the second edition of the *Gincana* magazine, Mr. Gérald Tremblay said, and I quote, “the City of Montréal is committed, in the future, to making every efforts to support the work of Dr. Djoghlaif and his team. We know that the protection of biodiversity is not only a crucial challenge for Canada, but also for the rest of the world and in particular for the poorest countries. Let us work together for biodiversity!”

Mr. Tremblay and his colleagues have fulfilled their commitments. As you are aware, the United Nations is represented through its programme as well as those of its 15 specialized agencies in all major cities in the world. The United Nations has at least 34 host country agreements. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is honoured and fortunate to be the sole United Nations entity to enjoy a special relationship with its host city. I am not aware of any United Nations convention enjoying a strategic partnership similar to the one that the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity enjoys with the City of Montreal. Here in this prestigious hall on 22 February 2007, I had the honour and the immense privilege of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Mr Gerard Tremblay. A few weeks later, the city adopted its medium-term sustainable development strategy and included the relationship between Secretariat and the city as a full-fledged chapter.

Based on this unique relationship, we had the opportunity to see our host, the Mayor of Montreal, taking a leadership role in promoting the role of cities in the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. The City of Montreal played a major role in the success of the first-ever meeting on cities and biodiversity, which was held in Curitiba, Brazil, as well as the meeting on local action on biodiversity held in Bonn in May last year. In recognition of his contribution, Mayor Tremblay was rightly elected as Vice-Chair of World Mayors Council on Climate Change, with special focus on biodiversity.

Last month, the Mayor of Saint Laurent, Mr. Alan DeSousa, in launching the forest strategy of the city, made a significant contribution to furthering the objectives of the Convention and the success of *The Green Wave* initiative by initiating an innovative idea: “one child one tree”.

It is therefore fitting that the host of the United Nations biodiversity secretariat be the first city in the world to prepare for the celebrations of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. I would like to pay special tribute to Mayor Tremblay for his continued support of the Convention and for hosting today's meeting.

To use Mayor Tremblay's own words from a few years ago: "The abundance of life on Earth is the most important richness bequeathed to us and no effort must be spared to preserve it."

It is for this reason that the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. It also decided to convene for the first time in the history of the United Nations a high-level meeting exclusively devoted to biodiversity during its sixty-fifth session, on 20 September 2010, with the participation of Heads of State and Government. This historic meeting will take place four weeks before the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit. 2010 will also coincide with the convening of the G8 and the G20 summits in Huntsville, Ontario, in June 2010. The Heiligendamm summit in 2007, the Hakkaido Toyako summit in 2008 and the L'Aquila summit this year have put biodiversity on the agenda of the Heads of State and Government. The 2010 Potsdam Initiative, the Kobe biodiversity plan of action and the Syracuse Charter have established a solid partnership between the G8 and their partners. I have no doubt that the G8 and their partners under the leadership of Canada, the host of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, will be another major contribution in mainstreaming biodiversity at the highest political agenda of the world leaders and the engage all the stakeholders in the battle for life on Earth. This is the very objective of the International Year and this is why we are gathered here today at the City Hall of the United Nations City on Biodiversity.

The Minister of Environment of Canada, Mr. Jim Prentice stated yesterday, "Canada is proud to host the Secretariat to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and was pleased to be able to contribute to the creation of the logo for International Year of Biodiversity. Protecting biodiversity is a global concern requiring local action so it is fitting that the City of Montreal is hosting this event. The creation and launch of this very striking logo will help to raise global awareness of the important responsibility that we all share."

It is for me a unique privilege and an honour to present to you the official logo of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. Here in Montreal, with its 2,100 green spaces covering 6,500 hectares and its network of 22 major parks, 12 of them natural, the slogan of the International Year should ring true to everyone: Biodiversity is Life ... Biodiversity is OUR life.

In celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity, let us be inspired and guided by the wisdom of Jacques Godefroy de Tonnancour, a great son of Montreal, who said that: "To know is to awaken to something. I owe to insects the infinite privilege of awakening to the greatness of the world." I hope that 2010 will provide to mankind the infinite privilege of awakening to the greatness of the world

Thank you for your kind attention.