



**STATEMENT**

**BY MR AHMED DJOGLAF**

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

**AT THE OPENING SESSION**

**OF THE**

**SIXTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING  
GROUP ON ARTICLE 8(j) AND RELATED PROVISIONS OF  
THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

*Montreal, 2 November 2009*

*Please check against delivery*



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COP 10 / MOP 5

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nia:wen Kowa. The ceremony welcoming us today and providing us with a blessing to assist our work by the representatives of the Mohawk Nation—is a clear demonstration of the intrinsic link between culture and nature and the unique contribution of indigenous peoples and local communities in protecting life on Earth. My heartfelt thanks to the representatives of the Mohawk Nation and through them to all indigenous communities for reminding us of this reality.

Indigenous and local communities constitute a relatively small portion of the world's 6.3 billion people; yet these communities represent the largest portion of linguistic and cultural diversity on Earth, and their traditional lands and waters overwhelmingly contain the greatest remaining reserves of biodiversity, which includes genetic diversity.

This Working Group, established in 1998, is a unique mechanism, and its establishment is a recognition of the significance attached by the 193 Parties to the Convention to the effective participation of the custodians of traditional knowledge as key partners in achieving the three objectives of the Convention.

Austria, Denmark, Norway and Spain have provided the opportunity for 48 indigenous and local community representatives to participate in both this meeting and next week's meeting of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing. I wish to express our deep appreciation to the donor Governments for contributing to ensure that the voice of largest possible number of indigenous people will be heard and their contribution offered at this critical phase of the life of the Convention.

Biodiversity has been protected, maintained and even increased over time through the application of their traditional knowledge. We know that the practice of traditional knowledge nurtures both biological resources and hence genetic diversity.

It is therefore no coincidence that this, sixth meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions is mandated to provide views to next week's eighth meeting of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, on an essential component of the international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, namely, "associated traditional knowledge". We have consensus that the international regime should address "associated traditional knowledge". Parties have agreed that the international regime is to effectively implement the provisions of both Articles 15 and 8(j), (which of course should be seen as mutually reinforcing).

I urge you to fulfil this mandate taking into account the deliberations and conclusions of the expert group meeting on traditional knowledge held in Hyderabad, India, in July. I would like to ask Mr. Goyal, the head of delegation of India, to convey to Mr. Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Environment of India, my deep gratitude for his personal contribution to the success of this meeting and to convey to the people and Government of India my sincere gratitude for offering to host the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will also coincide with the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature in Rio de Janeiro of the Convention on Life on Earth.

The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties will offer a unique opportunity to assess progress achieved in the implementation of the Aichi Nagoya Compact. Your meeting this week offers a unique opportunity to contribute in shaping the outcomes of the Aichi-Nagoya meeting.

In Nagoya, in addition to the finalization of the negotiation of the international regime on access and benefit sharing, a new Strategic Plan for the Convention will be adopted which will be

integrated in the revised national strategies and action plan by Parties. The new Strategic Plan will integrate the 2050 vision and the 2020 biodiversity target. The new Strategic Plan will need to take into account the future-looking programme of work. The new programme of work will allow us to consider how traditional knowledge may be better utilized to address the grave problems currently facing humanity, including our unsustainable practices, climate change and the ever-rising tide of extinctions. With each loss, we are further impoverished.

Such an emphasis could ensure that traditional knowledge is more fully taken into account in resource management and sustainable development and in an increased focus on implementing the ecosystem approach, which is very much aligned with both Article 8(j) and Article 10(c).

Such an emphasis will coincide with the International Year of Biodiversity, which will culminate in September 2010 with a high-level meeting during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly with the participation of Heads of State and Government and devoted exclusively to biodiversity.

To this end, I want to encourage a strong partnership between the Convention, Parties and indigenous and local communities to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and to highlight their contributions to maintaining biodiversity and providing solutions to the climate change crises

The great North American, Chief Seattle, said that

*“(I have seen) in any great undertaking, it is not enough for a man to depend simply on himself .....*”

And so I want to emphasize to you that *we are together in this.*

Exactly one week ago today, on 26 October 2009, Iraq became the 192nd Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity. I wish to recognize and extend a special welcome to the representative of Iraq in this meeting and I invite you to give him a warm applause.

On 10 December, Somalia will become the 193rd Party. Andorra will soon become the 194th Party, and I sincerely hope that in Nagoya we shall be joined by the United States of America as the 195th Party.

Distinguished delegates,

Reflecting in particular on a pivotal moment in the history and the significance of your meeting today, I want to recall the words of the great Native American writer, Chief Luther Standing Bear, who said:

*"Knowledge is inherent in all things. The world is a library and its books are the stones, leaves, grass, brooks and the birds and animals that shared, alike with us, the storms and blessings of the Earth.*

Let our children and grandchildren continue to enjoy the blessings. I wish you a very productive meeting

Thank you for your attention.