



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

## **STATEMENT**

**BY MR. AHMED DJOGLAF**

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

**AT THE OPENING SESSION**

**OF THE**

**EIGHTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED  
WORKING GROUP ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING**

*Montreal, 9 November 2009*



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Life in harmony, into the future  
いのちの共生を、未来へ  
COP 10 / MOP 5

I would first like to extend to you all a very warm welcome to the headquarters of your Secretariat here in Montreal. Needless to say that your meeting today is of a crucial importance to the success of the Aichi Nagoya compact. It is of a crucial importance if the Curitiba commitment for the implementation of the agreement reached at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development is going to be met. It has been said by your co-chair Tim Hodges “the most important meeting in the history of this working group”. We have just heard Mr Jochen Flasbarth, the representative of the President of Conference of the Parties. He stated that, “This is an extraordinary meeting; it is not just a meeting, it is the meeting where postponing action is not an option.”

In early September this year, in Strömstad, Sweden, the European ministers of the environment acknowledged at their meeting on “Visions for Biodiversity Beyond 2010 – People, Ecosystem Services and the Climate Crisis” that the 2010 biodiversity target will not be met. They reaffirmed that business as usual is no longer an option for humanity. Last month, the 300 participants attending the first meeting of the Kobe Biodiversity Dialogue reached the same conclusion.

Last month also, at the Republic Polytechnic in Singapore— the “Garden City of the World”— the 300 representatives of the 10 ASEAN countries and their dialogue partners and institutions, including your Secretariat, attending the first ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity decided to provide leadership to respond to the call for action of Ms. Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State in the Singapore Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Education, to reassure her three year old son Justin Lee and by doing so to reassure all the children of the world about their tomorrow. Indeed, the future of our children cannot be put into bracketed text.

The document before you arising from your Paris meeting has some 2,800 brackets, and more will be added this week. You will have less than 56 working hours in Cartagena next year to fulfil the 2010 commitment you made in Curitiba for the implementation of the Johannesburg Summit agreement on access and benefit-sharing.

Your meeting today is taking place 355 days before the opening of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and 63 days before 2010 and the start of the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity, which will include, in September 2010, the first high-level meeting exclusively devoted to biodiversity to be held in conjunction with a session of the United Nations General Assembly.

By joining the great biodiversity family, Iraq and Somalia have sent to the world a strong political message that cannot be ignored. In spite the very unique and challenging political situations faced by their people, they have decided to join forces with the other nations of the world to meet the most important common challenge facing mankind in the twenty-first century: the unprecedented loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change. They have decided to join forces with the people of the world to win the battle for “Life on Earth”, the only war of the twenty-first century that deserves to be forcefully waged by mankind.

As the great Canadian statesman and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, once said:

*“A great gulf has been opened between man's material advance and his social and moral progress, a gulf in which he may one day be lost if it is not closed or narrowed.”*

The future of our children is at stake as we are faced with another gulf generated by our generation. A gulf between man and nature, a gulf in which our childrens' future may one day be

lost if it is not closed or narrowed and if no action is taken today by you and me.

Today in Berlin, more than 100,000 citizens are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. A human chain of 30,000 citizens is being formed. Last week, a German lady, Ms Nicola Breier, made a distinct contribution in the fall of yet another wall—that between the indigenous and local communities and Parties to the Convention. A human chain of 328 participants was formed during the adoption of the recommendations of the Working Group on Article 8(j). Today, another German, Mr Jochen Flasbarth, the representative of the President of the Conference of the Parties, is determined to make his own contribution to the fall of another wall between and among Parties and their partners on access and benefit sharing. He will rely on the leadership of the co-chairs Mr. Fernando Casas and Mr. Tim Hodges during your meeting this week in Montreal, a city in a country that has given the best of her sons in the service of international peace and freedom, together with their allies including the United States of America.

Last month, the forty-fourth President of the United States of America, Mr Barack Obama, following the announcement of the decision of the Nobel Peace Prize Jury, stated that:

*“I know that throughout history the Nobel Peace Prize has not just been used to honour specific achievements, it’s also been used as a means to give momentum- to set a cause. And that is why I will accept this award as a call to action-a call for all nations to confront the common challenges of the twenty-first century.”*

It is your duty today as representatives of the nations of the world to confront the common challenges of the twenty-first century. It is your duty during the remaining 55 negotiating hours left this week to agree on the nature of the Aichi-Nagoya International Regime on Access and Benefit, thereby making your distinct contribution as parents and responsible citizens of the world to narrowing the gulf between man and nature and by doing so contributing to closing the gap between material advance, on the one hand, and social and moral progress, on the other.

This is what the third objective of the convention on life on Earth, is all about. This is what the entire Convention on Biological Diversity. This is “about real life and real people” as we have been reminded by Tim. Let us therefore be inspired and guided during this week by his statement that, “Your effort this week will ultimately have direct impact on people and the universal struggle for a fair, just and beneficial deal.” Your work this week will have such an impact if we can adopt on 29 October 2010 in Aichi-Nagoya the International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing for the benefit of Justin Lee and all the children of the world.

Thank you for your attention.