



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

## **STATEMENT**

**BY MR AHMED DJOGLAF**

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THE CELEBRATION BY BRAZIL OF THE START OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY**

**8 JANUARY 2010  
CURITIBA, BRAZIL**

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いのちの共生を、未来へ  
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

A thousand words cannot convey the emotion of a single image. Thank you very much Mr. Jean Lemire for your living testimony of your last expedition in Arctic and for sharing with us today your fears and hopes and explaining why we are gathered here today in Curitiba.

Eighteen years ago, the Convention on Biological Diversity was born at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or the “Earth Summit”, in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil, fittingly, was the first country to sign it. The then President of Brazil and President of the Conference, Fernando Collor, stated: “Without a global order with greater justice, there will be tranquil prosperity for no one.” And indeed, the Rio Conference was a landmark moment in the search for a truly global prosperity: it was the moment when concrete international commitments began to grow toward preserving the incredible richness of Earth’s natural resources for the benefit of all. The world owes Brazil much gratitude for successfully hosting such an historic event.

Four years ago, Brazil again strode to the front of the international stage, hosting the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, here in the city of Curitiba. The memorable words of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on the occasion were a strong call to action: “Anything that might threaten biodiversity or conspire against the equal distribution of resources should be rejected as a threat to the survival of the human race and the Earth.” Attended by some 4,000 participants, Curitiba like Rio was a great success. More than 122 Ministers and other heads of delegations attended the first-ever interactive dialogue under the Convention. A network of women ministers was established, youth and children were mobilized to give their support to the Convention, and business leaders met alongside government ministers to demonstrate their willingness to work towards the 2010 biodiversity target. For the first time ever, a ministerial dialogue with the chief executive officers of private companies was established, and the Conference of the Parties adopted its first-ever decision on private-sector involvement. Curitiba, ultimately, was the birth place of the new enhanced phase of the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. For all of Brazil’s hard work in making this happen, the world owes it another debt of gratitude.

In 2007 Curitiba stepped forward again, when at the initiative of Mayor Carlos Richa it hosted the first-ever Cities and Biodiversity Summit. In 2009, the “LIFE certification” initiative was also launched in Curitiba, a Brazilian project with the goal of both quantifying and officially recognizing actions by companies related to biodiversity conservation. And, just yesterday, here in Curitiba, we concluded the second Cities and Biodiversity Summit, showing the long-term commitment of both this city and this country toward preserving the world’s biological resources.

It is therefore deeply appropriate that the first celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 should take place here in Brazil, in Curitiba. *Obrigado*, Excellency Izabella Teixeira. It is so appropriate since Brazil is the planet’s most biodiverse country, with a staggering 70 per cent of the world’s catalogued animal and plant species, 15 to 20 per cent of its overall biodiversity, and amongst the greatest number of endemic species found in any one country. Furthermore, Brazil has the greatest area of tropical rainforest anywhere, which its Government has taken admirable steps to protect. Following the implementation of the Plan of Action for Protection and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon in 2004, the rate of deforestation had by 2007 decreased by almost 60 per cent.

Curitiba, for its part, is often referred to as Brazil’s ecological capital, with a network of 28 parks and wooded areas and 54 square metres of green space per person. Statistics like these speak directly to what the International Year of Biodiversity is about. Today’s celebration of the Santa Inacio Urban Park is another testimony of the commitment of the people and authorities of

the city of Curitiba. *Obrigado*, Prefecto Beto Richa. The commitment of the Mayor for Curitiba to be the first city to sign the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity needs to be applauded and emulated by other cities.

Let us seize the moment. The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity provides a unique opportunity to put biodiversity at the top of the political agenda and create a truly universal alliance with all stakeholders to protect life on Earth. The goals of the International Year are threefold. We must encourage the citizens of the world to discover the biodiversity that surrounds them. We must help them realize its value, their connection to it and the consequences of its ongoing loss. And we must motivate and empower them to do all they can to save it.

Many different events have been planned over the course of the year to help us achieve these goals. In three days, the International Year will be officially launched in Berlin with the participation of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Very shortly, a high-level scientific conference in Paris will launch the UNESCO exhibition on the International Year of Biodiversity. In February, the sixth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity will take place in Norway, as well as a Global Ministerial Environmental Forum in Bali. In May, the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook will be launched, offering a first global assessment of progress made toward the 2010 target, an analysis of attempts to date to implement the objectives of the Convention, and a projection of future changes in biodiversity levels and possible response measures. Then, in September, one of the most important events of the year will take place: the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where for the first time ever a high-level meeting on biodiversity with the participation of Heads of State and Government will be convened. Afterwards, in October, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention will be held in Nagoya, Japan, following which the closing ceremonies of the International Year will take place in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, in December, along with a ceremony anticipating the 2011 International Year of Forests.

The Nagoya meeting of the Conference of the Parties promises to be a truly extraordinary event. There, the Parties will make a final assessment of progress toward the 2010 biodiversity target, set a new biodiversity targets for 2020 and 2050, finalize a comprehensive post-2010 Strategic Plan for ultimately stopping biodiversity loss in the years to come, and establish an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. All of this will be done using a bottom-up approach, with the participation and input of a broad range of stakeholders.

To this end, this meeting will include a summit on cities and biodiversity, as well as forums for, amongst others, parliamentarians, cooperative agencies and the private sector. A high-level ministerial segment will also take place from 27 to 29 October. Ultimately, a grand global alliance of all sectors of society will be formed in Nagoya, making it a truly watershed moment in the struggle to preserve the diversity of life on Earth.

As we set forth on our communal journey toward Nagoya and into the post-2010 world, let us draw inspiration from the famous words of Brazil's great environmental defender Chico Mendes: "At first I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees, then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realize I am fighting for humanity." And indeed, that is precisely what we who share Chico Mendes' spirit are trying to do: we are fighting to save humanity from its own short-sightedness, from destroying the natural base on which our health and prosperity ultimately depend. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us, "Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is OUR life."

Thank you for your kind attention.

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