

**MESSAGE FROM AHMED DJOGHLAF ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
AICHI-NAGOYA CELEBRATION EVENT OF THE OPENING OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY  
HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2010**

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to convey my message to the Aichi-Nagoya Celebration event of the opening of the International Year of Biodiversity.

As you may know, events to celebrate the opening of this memorable year have been held worldwide. I've already seen the two very successful International Year of Biodiversity celebration events in Curitiba and Berlin, where I felt people's enthusiasm about biodiversity. This wave of celebration will be followed by a high-level event next week in Paris at UNESCO, during which a travelling global exhibition on biodiversity will be launched. It is wonderful to hear that another event to mark the International Year of Biodiversity is to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, where the next meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be convened.

Biodiversity continues to be lost at an unprecedented rate, thus threatening the capacity of the planet to continue providing its goods and services. The current rate of extinction is estimated to be up to 1,000 times higher than the natural rate. We may be at entering a new era of the sixth global mass extinction of species, and the first to be generated by human beings. However, the impact and consequences of this unprecedented loss of the ability of our planet to continue providing its goods and services that we human beings take for granted is unknown to the larger audience as well as to policy makers.

It is for this reason that the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity with a view of engaging the people all over the world in the fight to protect life on Earth. The goal of this unique event in the life of the Convention on Biological Diversity is to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity, to communicate the human costs of its ongoing loss, and to get the people, and in particular youth and children, involved in efforts to conserve and sustainably use our natural heritage and to protect our lives and the lives of our children. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us, "Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is OUR life."

I am happy to find that a variety of actions have been implemented and expanding to diverse communities in Aichi-Nagoya. For example, the registered number of COP10 Partnership activities has reached almost 500. Additionally, an event to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity, less than a half year before the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held in May. Also, I hear that actions toward the meeting of the Conference of the Parties have been gaining momentum among children, youth, academic institutions, and so forth.

During the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in the Shirotori area, adjacent to the meeting venue, a huge Interactive Fair for Biodiversity will be held. The Fair will provide a great opportunity for presentations and interaction under the theme of biodiversity.

As the host region of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Aichi-Nagoya and the COP10 CBD Promotion Committee will convene an important conference for leaders from local governments worldwide—the City Biodiversity Summit 2010. It gives me great joy to hear that Local Government Conference on Biodiversity 2009 as the pre city biodiversity summit, ended in great success. Here, I assure you of my utmost support to the great success in the City Summit as well.

The launch of the International Year of Biodiversity by people and governments in Aichi-Nagoya is of high political importance. It will build on the outstanding results so far achieved by the COP10 CBD Promotion Committee through its June 2008 kick-off symposium and last October's celebration of one year before tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which was attended by more than 20,000 people.

As we approach the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the City Biodiversity Summit, I expect that awareness about the importance of biodiversity will further spread among people in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture and Japan.

I wish you a very successful celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity in Aichi-Nagoya and look forward to historic achievements for Japan and the world at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

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