



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

## **STATEMENT**

**BY MR. AHMED DJOGHLAF**

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**SPANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
CONFERENCE  
CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR ON  
BIODIVERSITY  
AT THE MEETING ON**

**“POST-2010 BIODIVERSITY VISION AND TARGET – THE ROLE OF  
PROTECTED AREAS AND ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS IN EUROPE”**

*Madrid, 26 January 2010*

*Please check against delivery*



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いのちの共生を、未来へ  
COP 10 / MOP 5

Dr. Elena Espinosa, Minister of Environment and Rural & Marine Affairs, Government of Spain.  
Mr. Stavros C. Dimas, European Commissioner for the Environment,  
Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Spain is one of the 25 hotspots of biodiversity in the world. The biodiversity of Spain is considered as the highest of the European Union. It is not therefore a mere coincidence that the Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero stated, “My idea of Spain is that of a country committed to the environment and the preservation of its landscape, its natural riches and its oceans, because only in conservation of these resources resides our hope for the future.”

It is also not pure coincidence that Lisbon Treaty has entered into force during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. It is not also a pure coincidence that Spain has put the two most important environmental challenges facing mankind, namely biodiversity loss compounded by climate change, at the top of the agenda for its European Union presidency. The first ministerial meeting this year of the European Union was held a couple of days ago in Seville to assess the outcomes of the Copenhagen meeting on climate change. Here we are today gathered under leadership Dr. Elena Espinosa to shape the post-2010 biodiversity vision not only the European Union but for the whole of Europe. As the number of protected areas in Spain has increased by 59 per cent over the last ten years representing 4.5 million hectares, it is not a mere coincidence that the focus of our meeting is protected areas and ecological networks in Europe. Protected areas are essential for achieving the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Since its adoption, six years ago, the Convention’s programme of work on protected areas has emerged as a defining framework and a unique “blueprint” for protected areas for decades to come. Since its adoption, 27 countries have reported the establishment of a total of 6,000 new terrestrial and 800 new marine protected areas covering approximately 112.39 million hectares of land and territorial seas.

As a result, the world’s protected areas have increased by nearly 60 per cent since the adoption of the Convention. The Friends of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, the Friends of PoWPA, have played a vital role in this success through a broad-based coalition of all major stakeholders.

Inspired and guided by the spirit of the Friends of PoWPA and the urgency to act now, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. In his message to the international community, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that “Business as usual is not an option,” and that new targets and a new vision is needed.” To this end, and for the first time in the history of the United Nations a high level meeting of the General Assembly exclusively devoted to biodiversity will be held in New York in September this year with the participation of Heads of State and Government. Indeed, business as usual is no more an option.

The Secretary-General also stated that “new targets and a new vision is indeed urgently needed”. In launching the International Year of Biodiversity on 11 January in Berlin, on behalf of the Presidency of the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting, German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged the world to take the necessary steps to protect the biological diversity of the Earth. Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Junior of Guinea-Bissau delivered a similar message early this week at UNESCO headquarters in Paris at a meeting attended by Jean Louis Borloo, the Minister of the Environment of France.

This new vision cannot be achieved without the full engagement of all stakeholders, all States and all citizens of the world. It is only through broad-based partnerships, commitment,

cooperation, coordination, communication, capacity and capital that we shall succeed in ensuring that life will continue to flourish on Earth for the benefit of all species, including human species. A long-lasting, universal alliance of all stakeholders to protect life on earth is the only response to meet the unprecedented challenges facing mankind of the loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change. This is what the International Year of Biodiversity is all about and this is why we are gathered here today in Madrid, a city that has adopted Cybele as one of its Patrons. The goddess immortalized by the city's Fuente and Plaza de Cibeles was known among the Greeks as "Earth Mother" as it embodies the fertile Earth, a goddess of caverns and mountains, walls and fortresses, nature, wild animals, especially lions and bees. In short, it represents life on Earth.

Let us therefore be guided and inspired by the spirit of Cybele and adopt, together as a family of nations, the Cybele Commitment for Life on Earth. Let us not miss this unique opportunity. As Pedro Calderón de la Barca said, "Lost chances are the worst misfortunes." And this is an opportunity we simply cannot afford to squander.

I thank you for your kind attention.