

**MESSAGE FROM AHMED DJOGHLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE TENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON
BIOSAFETY**

Ten years ago, on 29 January 2000, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety after more than five years of intense negotiations. This historic occasion made the Protocol the first major international environmental agreement of the twenty-first century. Since then, support for the Protocol has grown steadily. To date, 156 States and the European Community have become Parties to the Protocol, which makes it one of the most rapidly ratified international treaties in history.

Much has been achieved during the past 10 years. For example, the Biosafety Clearing-House is fully operational and is facilitating the exchange of information on living modified organisms, an action plan for building capacities for the effective implementation of the Protocol has been developed and a mechanism to promote compliance with the Protocol and provide advice or assistance to Parties is in place. Furthermore, detailed identification requirements in documentation accompanying shipments of living modified organisms have been agreed.

Important steps have also been taken towards establishing international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms. In the next few days, the second meeting of the Friends of the Co-Chairs concerning liability and redress in the context of the Protocol will be held in Kuala Lumpur to work towards finalizing the draft rules and procedures, including a legally binding instrument in the form of a supplementary protocol, for consideration and adoption by the Parties at their fifth meeting, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October this year.

At the national level, more than 120 countries have now developed legal and administrative frameworks necessary to implement the Protocol, and the awareness of the Protocol by different stakeholders, including farmers, has increased significantly in many countries.

The tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol coincides with the International Year of Biological Diversity which seeks to sensitize and re-engage people all over the world to conserve and sustainably use the diversity of life on Earth. The Protocol is one of the important instruments contributing to the protection of biodiversity from potential adverse effects of living modified organisms.

As we mark this historic occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol, I wish to pay tribute to all the States that have already become Parties and to urge those that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Protocol as soon as possible. I also take this opportunity to call upon all citizens of the world to support and actively engage in the implementation of the Protocol. The future of life on Earth depends on our collective efforts to safeguard biological diversity from all threats, including the potential adverse effects of living modified organisms. “Biodiversity is life, Biodiversity is OUR life”.