



**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 RECEPTION AT THE LONDON ZOO IN ANTICIPATION  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY**

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me tell you how much I regret of not being able to be with you this afternoon. Indeed unforeseen reason has prevented me to be with you and to convey in person my gratitude to our guests speakers for having blessed by their presence today event as well as for their deep commitment for saving life on Earth and empowering the children of today to be the architect of their future. Without the engagement of world-renowned personalities such as Daryl Hannah and Ranulph Fiennes, the environment would be without the support of some of its most important and influential defenders. And without the leadership of companies like Airbus, it would be difficult to bring an environmental perspective into the marketplace, one of the places where it is most needed today.

It is fitting that the results of Airbus's international survey on children's knowledge of biodiversity have been made public here at the London Zoo. Not only have Londoners been able to come face to face with the marvels of nature here for over 150 years now, but this is the oldest scientific zoo in the world and arguably the most prestigious: the work the Zoo carries out makes invaluable contributions to conservation research and to our scientific understanding of biodiversity.

Unfortunately, as we have heard, the news from the Airbus survey is not good: our children, who are tomorrow's citizens and decision-makers, show a dangerous ignorance when it comes to the natural world. This fact is doubly concerning when we consider that the recently-released third edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook* – the Convention's wide-ranging synthesis of the state of biodiversity today – shows that humans continue to drive species extinct at up to 1,000 times the natural background rate. Needless to say, we cannot win such an uphill battle for life on Earth if the coming generation has little knowledge of what is at stake.

The Convention is dedicated to addressing this problem through its youth education programme called *The Green Wave*, started at the initiative of the government of Germany two years ago. As part of the initiative, each year on 22 May—the International Day for Biological Diversity—children and youth in schools and groups worldwide plant a tree at 10 a.m. local time, creating a “green wave” across time-zones. Last year, hundreds of different groups participated in *The Green Wave*, including schools, biodiversity institutes, botanical gardens, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, governments, businesses and the media.

This year, with the support of Airbus and the National Geographic Society, *The Green Wave* is set to grow considerably. Widespread engagement is particularly important during this International Year of Biodiversity, which offers a prime opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity, to communicate the human costs of its ongoing loss, and to get people – and in particular youth and children – involved in efforts to conserve and sustainably use our natural heritage.

Indeed, encouraging the leaders of the world to provide leadership in shaping and implementing the new biodiversity vision is the objective of the first ever heads of state and government summit of the United Nations General Assembly which will be held in New York on 22 September. It is also the objective of the Aichi-Nagoya Summit on Biodiversity to be held in October this year with the active engagement of the 193 Parties and their partners including youth and business community. I can assure you that the results of your proceedings will be brought to the attention next Saturday to the participants of the celebration of the International Day on Biodiversity in Nairobi as well as to the New York and Nagoya Biodiversity Summits. This

would not have been possible with the support of Airbus and I would like to pay tribute to Mr Tom Elders the CEO of Airbus and his team and invite other business leaders to join force for protecting life on Earth.

William Wordsworth famously wrote: “Come forth into the light of things, let Nature be your teacher.” That is the message we need to spread today as we attempt to better educate our children about the irreplaceable value of nature, striving to preserve the great diversity of life on Earth for their sake as well as our own. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us: Biodiversity is life...biodiversity is OUR life.

Thank you for your kind attention.