



STATEMENT

BY AHMED DJOHLAF

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
BIODIVERSITY BY THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

Banteay Kdei Temple, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia, 20 June 2010

Please check against delivery



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada
Tel : +1 514 288 2220, Fax : +1 514 288 6588
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



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

Excellency Yim Chhay Ly, Deputy Prime Minister
Excellency Dr Mok Mareth, Senior Minister, Ministry of Environment
Governor of Siem Reap Province
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Biodiversity is life. It is the source of our food, our medicine, our economy, our culture, our identity and our spirituality. Without biodiversity, life will not exist. Biodiversity is our life. It is for this reason that the 110 Heads of State and Government attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August/September 2002 agreed to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010. However, the third edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* (GBO-3) issued last month by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity concludes that we have failed individually and collectively to achieve the Johannesburg 2010 biodiversity target.

This report on the status of biodiversity in the world, prepared on the basis of information contained in 120 national reports submitted by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the report submitted by Kingdom of Cambodia, shows that biodiversity continues to disappear at an unprecedented rate. Today, the rate of species extinction may be up to 1,000 times the natural rate. The report also warns that irreversible degradation may take place if ecosystems are pushed beyond certain tipping points, leading to the widespread loss of ecosystem services that we depend on greatly, such as air and water purification, the renewal of soil fertility, climate stabilization and the pollination of wild plants and crops.

It is for this reason that the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. The objective is to establish a global alliance for protecting life on Earth with the full engagement of all stakeholders without exception. To this end, and for the first time in the history of the United Nations, a summit of Heads of State and Government on biodiversity will be held on 22 September 2010 in New York during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. World leaders will therefore have the opportunity to provide direction and vision for the post-2010 biodiversity strategy. Their vision will be submitted to the 10,000 expected participants in the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan in October this year.

The Nagoya Biodiversity Summit will adopt a new Strategic Plan of the Convention for the period 2011-2020, which will include a 2050 biodiversity vision as well as a 2020 biodiversity target and sub-targets. The Aichi-Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing will be a key instrument in promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This new biodiversity vision is in line with the vision of the Cambodian people and their leaders.

In inaugurating the Forestry Administration Building of Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in 2004, Prime Minister Hun Sen stated: "We must courageously look forward into the future which requires our strong and steadfast commitment in accelerating reforms in management and protection of our forests from destruction and waste, for the benefit of the next generations of Cambodians."

Cambodia has 29 protected areas, three wetland sites of international importance and one Biosphere Reserve. Overall, these sites cover more than 18 per cent of the country and span almost all types of habitat. The Kingdom of Cambodia has therefore over-delivered on the Johannesburg target for protected areas.

Today's celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity by the people and Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia is yet another demonstration of your continued

commitment to live in harmony with nature, which is the slogan of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity offers an opportunity to build on these trends, both in Cambodia and internationally. The goals of this important Year are to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, to communicate the human costs of its ongoing loss, and to get people, and in particular young people and children, involved in efforts to conserve and sustainably use our natural heritage.

I am very glad that today's celebration by the Kingdom of Cambodia is taking place in line with the spirit and the letter of the objectives of the International Year of Biodiversity. More than 1,000 participants are present with us today. The event is taking place here in Siem Reap Province, the home of more than 1,000 temples. It is therefore fitting that this celebration is taking place at the Banteay Kdei Temple and with the participation of the religious community. There is, after all, a strong link between nature and the religions of the world without exception, and the celebration of today's event with the participation of monks emphasizes the need to engage the religious community in protecting God's creation.

I am also very pleased that today celebration is taking place with the strong participation of the children and young people, the citizens of tomorrow. Today's younger generation needs to be reconnected with nature, and this is the objective of *The Green Wave* campaign under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Last week, the President of the United States of America, referring to the environmental disaster unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico, stated: "In the same way that our view of our vulnerability and our foreign policy was shaped profoundly by 9/11, I think this disaster is going to shape how we think about the environment and energy for many years to come." I am therefore very pleased that today's event is taking place with the massive participation of the army, the police force and the rangers, for the loss of biodiversity is a major threat to peace and the security of the world and it is only fitting for the defence community to be strong ally in efforts to combat the loss of biodiversity.

I would like therefore to congratulate the national and international partners that have decided to join forces with the host of our meeting to celebrate this event. I would like also to pay tribute to Your Excellency Yim Chhay Ly, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, for blessing this event by your presence and demonstrating the strong commitment of your Government to promote the biodiversity agenda under the able leadership of the Senior Minister Dr. Mok Mareth.

Your participation is a clear message that all of us must do our part and play an active role during the International Year of Biodiversity. With the future well-being of our children at stake, business as usual is no longer an option. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us: Biodiversity is life...Biodiversity is OUR life.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you a very successful celebration.