

**MESSAGE FROM MR. AHMED DJOGHLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST
LATIN AMERICAN CONGRESS (4TH OF ARGENTINA) FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF BIODIVERSITY**

**San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina
22 – 26 November 2010**

Ladies and Gentleman,

This Congress comes at a very timely moment, following so soon after the successful tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) in Nagoya, Japan in October of this, the International Year of Biodiversity.

Among other demonstrations of commitment, Parties to the Convention made substantial progress in Nagoya with agreements on Access and Benefit Sharing, financial resources and a new Strategic Plan for the Convention 2011-2020. Now that the politicians have acted, it is time for all sectors to act with renewed commitment to ensure that the world's collective failure to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target is not repeated. The need for more effective biodiversity conservation is urgent. The third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook showed that species worldwide continue to disappear at up to 1,000 times the natural background rate of extinction and warns that without concerted action massive further loss of biodiversity is projected to occur before the end of the century. Ecosystems are approaching tipping points beyond which they will be irreversibly degraded, and species are lost before they are known to science and before possible uses can be known, with dire consequences for human wellbeing.

This Congress, by bringing together such a strong representation of the academic, political, and applied biodiversity conservation communities from Latin America, is an ideal opportunity to share progress in biodiversity science and practice and plan the new commitments needed to strengthen regional action for biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity does not respect national boundaries. Only through concerted, coordinated action between countries can we halt the spiral of biodiversity loss. More, and more effective cooperation is needed not only at the regional level but across regions. Indeed, COP10 recognised “the urgent need to enhance implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity through South-South and triangular cooperation...”. I believe Latin America, home to astonishing biodiversity in every sense – genetic, species, ecosystems, human – will, through this Congress, show the world that it is ready to meet this challenge.

Achieving the targets of the 2011-2020 CBD Strategic Plan will require more effective engagement with scientists, not least taxonomists, than in the past. Among the rich tapestry of themes and issues that the Congress will address, I would therefore like to highlight one of the most prominent in the Programme, one which is also of key importance for achieving and monitoring many of the targets in the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020: taxonomy. Taxonomy and taxonomic capacity are basic concerns for

biodiversity conservation and therefore of the CBD. Knowledge of what species occur where is fundamental for guiding effective conservation plans and interventions. As climate change causes range shifts, new invasive species will become threatening and the boundaries of some protected areas will need to change. The programme of work for the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) was developed under the Convention to guide the taxonomic research, outputs and capacity development needed for implementation of the Convention. No country can have all the taxonomic capacity it requires – taxonomy is a global science – but for CBD implementation it is vital that each country develops appropriate capacities such that it has access - within country or otherwise - to the expertise, tools and information needed to identify and monitor biodiversity and threats to it. The programme of work for the GTI therefore identifies regional and global technical cooperation networks as a key mechanism for meeting national taxonomic needs. Accordingly, I hope participants in the Taxonomy Symposium make tangible progress in furthering regional cooperation by establishing a strong network of taxonomists and linking taxonomy to the process of implementing the CBD.

Lastly, I congratulate all the organizers of the Congress and ask the Honorary President, Cleide Costa (Museo de Zoología, Universidad de São Paulo, Brasil) and President of the Congress, Mercedes Lizarralde de Grosso (INSUE UNT, CONICET) to kindly inform me of the outcomes of the Congress.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen for your attention.
