

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO CLOSING CEREMONY FOR  
THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY  
Kanazawa, 18 December 2010**

*Delivered by Ahmed Djoghlaif,  
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity*

At the beginning of the International Year of Biodiversity, I stressed that if we wish to leave a legacy of sustainability, business as usual is no longer an option. Throughout the year, in thousands of events in many dozens of countries, people around the world demonstrated new enthusiasm for preserving the biodiversity that sustains us.

Under the slogan “One UN for Biodiversity”, the United Nations system worked to show how biodiversity is central to poverty alleviation, development and human security. Decision makers seem to have heard the message. At the September high-level meeting of the General Assembly on biodiversity, world leaders emphasized the need to act now to save life on Earth. At the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit in November, Governments agreed on a new biodiversity vision, adopted the Aichi Biodiversity Targets that will guide national strategies and South-South cooperation, and endorsed a plan of action on cities and biodiversity.

The International Year also successfully advanced action on the legal front. The conclusion of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from Their Utilization is a major achievement. So too is the Kuala Lumpur-Nagoya Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

This year concluded with successful climate change negotiations in Cancun that included an important agreement on REDD Plus, backed by the financial resources to implement it. By promoting the conservation and sustainable management of forests we can not only mitigate climate impacts and increase resilience, but go a long way towards slowing the accelerating rate of biodiversity loss.

REDD Plus is part of a broader move to connect the dots between climate change and other core concerns, such as energy, water, food and demographic trends. Protecting ecosystems is integral to this equation, and will be an important area of focus for the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability I initiated in August to feed into preparations for the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and other international deliberations.

As we look forward to the 2011 International Year of Forests and the 2011-2020 United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, let us maintain and accelerate the momentum this past year has generated. Let us continue working to ensure that life on Earth will persist in all its diversity and complexity for the benefit of present and future generations.