



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



STATEMENT

BY MR AHMED DJOGLAF

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY

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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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad to be celebrating this 2010 International Day for Biodiversity here in Kenya, which has shown a long-standing commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Kenya signed the Convention at in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit and ratified it in 1994. Moreover, ten years ago at the Convention's fifth Conference of the Parties here in Nairobi, Kenya became the first country in the world to sign the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Speaking at the opening of COP5, then-President of Kenya Daniel Arap Moi stated that biodiversity provides the natural resource base for socio-economic development for the present and for the future, and that the world could not afford to lose much more of that socio-economic base if the battle to combat poverty and ensure a fair quality of life for all was to be won.

On this 2010 International Day for Biological Diversity, with its theme of Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation, Arap Moi's message bears repeating, for we continue to destroy the vast array of biological resources that contribute so much to human wellbeing.

300 million people worldwide, the majority poor, are estimated to depend substantially on forest biodiversity, including non-wood forest products, for their survival and livelihood. And yet about 13 million hectares of the world's forests are lost due to deforestation each year.

1 billion people depend on fish as their sole or main source of animal protein, while fish provided more than 2.6 billion people with at least 20 percent of their average per capita animal protein intake. And yet about half of marine stocks worldwide were fully exploited in 2005, while another one-quarter were overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion.

Coral reefs provide food and livelihood for most of the estimated 30 million small-scale fishers in the developing world. And yet 60 per cent of coral reefs could be lost by 2030 through fishing damage, pollution, disease, invasive alien species and coral bleaching.

Overall, it is estimated that natural capital constitutes 26 per cent of the total wealth of low-income countries, which is why slowing the loss of biodiversity was incorporated as a new target under the Millennium Development Goals. Let there be no doubt: it will be absolutely impossible to achieve sustainable development if we do not protect and preserve our biological resource base.

This year's International Day for Biological Diversity takes on added significance because 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. That is why "Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation" is not only the theme of today's celebrations, but is a major focus of the celebrations that are taking place throughout this year. Indeed, when governments and heads of state meet this fall, first in New York at the United Nations General Assembly in September, and then later in Nagoya Japan for the tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, they will have in mind the long-term wellbeing and prosperity of humanity as they formulate a global strategy for addressing biodiversity over the next decade, and a biodiversity vision for the next 50 years.

Today is also significant because, as part of the Green Wave youth education initiative, tree-planting are taking place across the world, including here in Nairobi. There is no better way to ensure our future wellbeing than by giving the next generation hands-on experience with biodiversity preservation. As Wangari Maathai has said, "When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and the seeds of hope."

Allow me to finish by thanking the Kenyan people and government for the leadership they have repeatedly shown on biodiversity issues over the years. Jomo Kenyatta said: "Our children may learn about heroes of the past. Our task is to make ourselves architects of the future." I hope that Kenyans will continue to be architects of the future – a sustainable future where a fair quality of life is ensured for all – throughout 2010 and beyond.

Thank you for your kind attention.