

STATEMENT BY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity



INTERNATIONAL
DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY
22 May 2008
**BIODIVERSITY
AND AGRICULTURE**

STATEMENT

by

AHMED DJOGLAF

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

to the

**THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**

**Washington, D.C.
11 November 2008**

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ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE
COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008



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

<http://www.cbd.int>
secretariat@cbd.int

Ladies and gentlemen,

You are meeting at an extraordinary time

The global food and fuel crisis has seen no sign of abating, while the recent financial crisis has taken the spotlight on the world's stage. Food crop prices are expected to remain high in 2009 and well above 2004 levels through 2015. These problems will be difficult to tackle, but to them must be added the challenge of meeting the 2010 target for biodiversity. The current biodiversity crisis is extraordinary: in the year 2000, only about 73% of the original global natural biodiversity was left. If current rates of loss continue unchanged, by 2050 biodiversity levels will be down to 62% of the original numbers, a further 11% reduction of our natural resource base.

Participants at the World Conservation Congress last month in Barcelona indicated that the target to bring about a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010 looks increasingly daunting. This grim prognosis means that our long-term food supply and economic stability are more threatened than ever. Phase 1 of the comprehensive intergovernmental report *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity* (TEEB) was made public at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Bonn last May, and it reveals some startling figures. We are currently experiencing a welfare loss of 50 billion euros a year of land-based ecosystem services alone, with an estimated cumulative loss of 14 trillion euros by 2050, or 7% of projected global GDP.

Not surprisingly, then, the IUCN Congress in Barcelona also called for a bail-out for nature. In addition, the United Nations Environment Programme appealed for a "Green New Deal" that could revive the stumbling global economy, combat climate change and loss of biodiversity, and eliminate poverty. Responding to the call from the Parties to the Convention for the objectives of the Convention to be integrated into development policies, G8 countries at their recent summit endorsed the Kobe Call for Action for Biodiversity and reiterated their commitment to increase their efforts to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss in order to achieve the globally agreed 2010 biodiversity target. According to the TEEB report, this will require an increased awareness that current investment in conservation initiatives can have substantial long-term economic and welfare returns.

The extraordinary time requires extraordinary commitments.

For the first time since the creation of the Global Environment Facility, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention has conducted an in-depth review of the availability of financial resources. The agreed mission is to substantially enhance international financial flows and domestic funding for biological diversity in order to achieve a substantial reduction of the current funding gaps in support of the effective implementation of the Convention's three objectives and the 2010 target.

The CBD strategy for resource mobilization is substantive and substantial. It was adopted with the active participation of many GEF Council members. It was prepared with the full support of the secretariat of the GEF acting as the financial mechanism. I would like to pay tribute to the CEO and her team for their outstanding support.

There are several major components of the Convention's financial strategy, which are reflected in the decisions emerging from the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

First, at a preliminary level, the Parties are asked to improve existing financial information through enhancing accuracy, consistency and delivery of data and by improved reporting on funding needs related to the Convention's three objectives.

Secondly, Parties are asked to intensify efforts to assess the economic costs of the loss of biodiversity and its associated ecosystem services, as well as the benefits of early action to prevent such losses. This information will inform decision-making, contribute to phases 2 and 3 of the report on the economics of ecosystem services that I have just mentioned, and more generally raise awareness about the financial benefits of conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Thirdly, the Parties are urged to create the enabling environment to mobilize both public- and private-sector investments in biodiversity. Engaging the business world is an increasingly important and ongoing effort of the CBD, with the ultimate aim of mainstreaming the idea that current investment in biodiversity protection will yield substantial long-term financial benefits.

Fourthly, the Parties are encouraged to foster increased South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation to enhance technical, financial, scientific and technological innovation on biodiversity issues.

Fifthly, the Parties are encouraged to include gender, indigenous people and local community perspectives in biodiversity-financing projects, which will allow for the incorporation of local concerns and traditional expertise.

Finally, the Parties are asked to integrate biodiversity into national development policies and plans by building on existing knowledge of the links between biodiversity protection and poverty alleviation.

The fifth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility offers the first measurement of the effectiveness of the strategy for resource mobilization. I encourage you, existing and potential donors, to step up efforts to ensure a successful substantial replenishment of the Global Environment Facility.

The extraordinary time entails extraordinary efforts.

The strategy for resource mobilization provides a blueprint for funding action at all levels for the years to come. It also offers a flexible framework for the development of measurable targets and/or indicators addressing all relevant funding sources, according to national priorities and capacities, and taking into account the special situation and needs of developing countries.

In adopting the strategy on resource mobilization, the Conference of the Parties also adopted the Bonn Message on Finance and Biological Diversity addressed to the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha later this month.

In addition, and for the first time, the Conference of the Parties was able to formulate a forward-looking outcome-oriented four-year framework of programme priorities related to utilization of GEF resources for biodiversity, in anticipation of the fifth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund.

It is expected that by its next meeting, the Conference of the Parties will streamline and prioritize its guidance mechanisms, and all other provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding will be fully implemented.

The extraordinary time demands extraordinary leadership.

These achievements would not have been made possible without the enhanced relation between the Convention and its financial mechanism under the able leadership of Ms Monique Barbut. Back in July 2007, in Paris, Governments welcomed the first-ever dialogue between the GEF Chief Executive Officer and the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties. The enhanced relation between the financial mechanism and the Convention was welcomed by the President of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties at the first meeting of the Bureau, held last month in Barcelona.

At its ninth meeting, the Conference of the Parties concluded the third review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, and noted the reform measures introduced by the Global Environment Facility to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of the financial mechanism.

Once again, the Conference of the Parties requested the Council to consider eight action-points to further improve the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

The expectations are great, and the stakes are getting higher. We thus need a continuance of extraordinary leadership.

The extraordinary time can deliver extraordinary results.

The next meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held in Nagoya in October 2010. The achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target will be assessed, and a new strategic vision for biodiversity will be finalized and an international regime on access and benefit-sharing will be adopted.

The meeting will coincide with the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity as well as the high-level segment of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly to be held in New York in September 2010 to assess progress toward achieving the 2010 biodiversity and to shape the way forward.

In our common journey to Nagoya, we look forward to the enhanced support of the financial mechanism of the Convention to assist the 191 Parties to implement their commitments and to deliver extraordinary results for life on Earth and for the generations to come.

I thank you for your kind attention.