



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety



ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE
UN Conference on Biological Diversity Bonn 2008

Video message of H.E. Sigmar Gabriel, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Federal Republic of Germany, on the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity, May 22, 2007

Ladies and gentlemen, honourable guests,

As the host of the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which will take place in Bonn next year from 19 to 30 May, I am delighted to have this opportunity to address a few words to you on International Day for Biological Diversity.

I feel that, especially in connection with biological diversity, **climate change, with its impacts and interactions**, is one of the areas in most urgent need of international action. I am therefore very pleased that this year's theme for International Day for Biological Diversity is "Biodiversity and Climate Change". Moreover, I believe that linking these two issues sends a signal. It is an opportunity to promote biodiversity conservation and raise public awareness and acceptance.

Biodiversity helps us to protect the climate. Healthy ecosystems not only supply us with food, raw materials and fertile soils, they also regulate the global climate and thus protect us from natural disasters such as floods, droughts and storms. In this context, I would especially like to highlight the carbon storage potential of natural and semi-natural woodland and bogs. Intact ecosystems also have a positive effect on other climate-relevant cycles and processes, for example on the hydrological system or the natural emissions and natural sinks of the greenhouse gases methane and nitrogen dioxide.

Conversely, climate change is a threat to biological diversity: the ice is melting away under the paws of polar bears, entire regions and their habitats are at risk of drying out – for instance Brazil's Amazon rainforest. Furthermore, the second part of the fourth

Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that 20 to 30 percent of the planet's species are likely to be at risk of extinction if global temperatures rise between 2 and 3 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

In short: **nature conservation is climate protection and climate protection is nature conservation.** This may be a trite statement, but it has complex implications. Essentially, it means that we must make the instruments of climate protection useful for nature conservation and vice versa.

Cooperation between the two conventions concerned – the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change – must be improved in order to enhance the **synergy effects between the instruments of climate protection and those of nature conservation.** I am therefore delighted that the Executive Secretary of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ivo de Boer, is taking part in this event and will later present his point of view.

Biological diversity is, incidentally, also the reason why I cannot be with you in Montreal. For today in Germany, in preparation for the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, we are launching a **national campaign for biodiversity.** Our aim is to communicate to a broad public the importance of protecting the natural foundations of life. Today, we will establish a **"nature alliance"** consisting of prominent people from politics, trade and industry, science, civil groups, culture and media, who will help us to convey our messages and inform and motivate the public.

In this context, I would like to congratulate you, Mr Djoghla, on the **outstanding video on "biodiversity and climate change"**, which became available on the CBD homepage a few days ago. It impressively highlights the links between biodiversity and the impacts of climate change and the resulting serious impacts on different interrelated ecosystems – and ultimately also on humans. We will be happy to distribute this video and use it to raise public awareness of the key messages of biodiversity conservation.

For today's celebration, I would like to wish you all the best, every success and many interesting talks. I look forward to seeing you all at the latest in a year's time in Bonn for the celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity during the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.