

**MESSAGE
OF
THE SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

On the occasion of the
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
The official launching of
The National Agrobiodiversity Action Plan of Sri Lanka

16 April 2008

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources



Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this very important event.

Biodiversity and Agriculture is the theme for the International Day for Biological Diversity 2008 which coincides with the in-depth review of the national action plan on agricultural biodiversity. This year Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has decided to commemorate International Day for Biological Diversity in collaboration with the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya and the Plant Genetic Resource Centre (PGRC), Department of Agriculture in recognition of their contribution as the leading partners of agricultural biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Biodiversity is the foundation of agriculture. Development of national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity and to promote their mainstreaming and integration in sectoral and cross sectoral plans and programmes is a growing challenge. The National Action Plan should be a part of the national development plan and be compatible with provincial and district development plans and strategies. All stakeholders have a responsibility to implement the measures mutually agreed upon and listed in the National Action Plan. We must also be prepared to respond to the challenge with national, international, public and private sector partnerships. This will require the corporation of all stakeholders at national level.

It is of great importance to increase both public and political awareness on the goods and services provided by agricultural biodiversity and the value and importance of such diversity for agriculture and the society at large. I am confident that the National Action Plan has a much clear framework for conserving agrobiodiversity ecosystems and resources as well as balancing agricultural productivity with the needs of ecosystems and biodiversity to ensure that they are all able to deliver their services in a sustainable manner.

I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues in Government agencies and the Non Governmental agencies for their collaborative effort. I also express my gratitude to the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya for the technical support provided for drafting the National Agrobiodiversity Action Plan of Sri Lanka.

I wish you a day of fruitful discussions.