

Gincana





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Winning the Battle for Life on Earth: fulfilling the 2010 Biodiversity Promise of the Heads of State



To date, 24 countries in Asia, Europe and Africa have been affected by the avian flu. 193 persons have been infected and 94 have died. There is a serious possibility of a global pandemic with far-reaching implications for human health and the environment. The potential economic impact of such a global pandemic is also serious, not only for the large economies of the world but also for local communities and small farmers. Questions are being raised on the likelihood that the H5N1 virus may become transmissible from human to human. Questions are also being raised on the effectiveness of first-line antiviral pharmaceuticals to attenuate the effects of H5N1 in humans. As a result, treatment, prevention and preparedness for the global pandemic are on the top of the global agenda. The response can be found, once again, in Mother Nature.

According to the World Health Organization, 80% of the human population relies on traditional medicine, 85% of which involves the use of plant extracts. Three-quarters of the top 150 prescription drugs in the United States are laboratory versions of chemicals found in plants, fungi, bacteria and vertebrates. The National Cancer In-

stitute has identified over 3,000 plants that are active against cancer cells, and 70% of these plants are found only in the rainforest. Two drugs obtained from a rainforest plant known as the Madagascar periwinkle, have increased the survival chances for children with leukemia from 20% to 80%. In fact, rainforests are the origin of a quarter of today's medicines. It is therefore not surprising to learn that health experts believe that Tamiflu—an antiviral medication derived from the pods of Chinese star anise plants—would be the best defense in the initial phase of any global influenza pandemic.

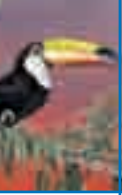
But Mother Nature not only holds the cure for treatment, it is also the key to prevention and preparedness for a global pandemic. Healthy ecosystems are essential to healthy humans. As Mrs Marya Mannes said, "The earth we abuse and the living things we kill will, in the end, take their revenge; for in exploiting their presence we are diminishing our future." A number of studies have documented the close connection between ecosystem degradation and increased human-health vulnerabilities. Those studies provide ample evidence that many of the diseases afflicting humans are brought about by ecological imbalances triggered by anthropogenic stress. Since 1960, more than 35 new infectious diseases have been recorded. In addition, ecological imbalances have also contributed to increasing the impact of old human diseases such as malaria, cholera and dengue fever. Today, malaria accounts for the death of 2.7 million people each year, mainly in Africa. Every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria. As a result the number of deaths resulting from new or old infectious diseases has doubled since 1980.

Chikungunya, derived from a Swahili word meaning "that which bends up" is a viral infection transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Since the beginning of this year, an outbreak of chikungunya has infected 170,000 people, or 20% of the population in Reunion, in the Indian Ocean, and 70 deaths have been registered. In February this year, at the same time as 250 soldiers of the German army were called in to clean

the Island of Riigen of the corpses of the wild birds killed by the H5N1 virus, 400 soldiers of the French army were deployed to clean Reunion of the infected mosquitoes. Environment degradation is indeed the new enemy of mankind.

Frank Lautenberg once said "The Ocean is tired. It's throwing back at us what we're throwing in there". Ecosystem changes have also increased the severity of floods and other natural or human-induced disasters. Healthy ecosystems are essential to preventing or mitigating impacts of disasters. During the 1950s there were six major floods affecting 7 million people, while in the 1990s this number increased to 26 floods affecting the lives of 150 million people. Last year alone, 88,000 people were killed as results of natural disasters. The year 2005 saw the aftermath of the tsunami in Asia, as well as hurricanes in central and north America, notably Hurricane Katrina, which triggered flooding in the United States city of New Orleans. The year also saw famine after crops were destroyed by locusts in Niger and one of the worst droughts of the last ten years in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa. Since 1980, more than 10,000 extreme climate events have led to the deaths of more than 500,000 people.

Mother Nature provides us with the treatment we need, the protection we require and all other elements required to sustain life on Earth. Biodiversity, the result of over three billion years of evolution, is a natural heritage and a vital resource for mankind. We draw from it directly our food, shelter, medicine, raw materials, recreation and culture. It is also vital for plant pollination, in the maintenance of air and water quality and soil fertility. Our existence as human beings depends on the services provided by the ecosystems of our planet. Biodiversity is part of our daily lives and livelihoods and constitutes the resources on which families, communities, nations and future generations depend. However, biodiversity on Earth is being destroyed at unprecedented rates. There is indeed strong evidence that the life-support systems of our planet are being overloaded with severe damage to our environment.



Wangari Maathai, *Nobel Laureate*

The Green Belt Movement is pleased to enter into an institutional arrangement with the Convention on Biological Diversity to offset the environmental impact of its operations. I invite all intergovernmental processes to consider enhancing their contribution to meeting the challenges of protecting life on earth, and translating this into support for the 3-fold objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Marine and coastal ecosystems are a source of protein to 6.2 billion people globally, and livelihoods and employment for at least 150 million people, particularly in poor countries. It is estimated that capture fisheries within coastal areas account for \$34 billion in yields annually. However the world fish stock has been reduced by an astonishing 90% since the start of industrial fishing. Global benefits from coral reefs, including tourism, fisheries and coastal protection are estimated at some \$30 billion per year. At the present time, close to a third of corals are gone, with 60 per cent expected to be lost by 2030. The total economic value of the 63 million hectares of wetlands around the world is estimated at up to \$940 billion annually. However more than a third of all mangroves have disappeared. Over 90 per cent of the world's poorest people depend on forests for their livelihoods; indeed more than a billion people live within the world's 19 forest biodiversity hotspots. However, 80% of the world's forest cover has disappeared and 13.7 million hectares of forest are destroyed every year.

As 2006 coincides with the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, it must be recalled that during the last 50 years, about two thirds of agriculture land has been degraded, in particular in Africa, where 36 countries face serious desertification processes. Drylands cover 40% of the world's land surface and affect the livelihood of one billion people. They are among the poorest and they are the ones who suffer the most from the loss of services caused directly by the pressure put on natural systems.

As a result, we are facing a rate of biodiversity loss unprecedented in human history. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, over the last 100 years, human-induced species extinction has multiplied as much as 1,000 times. Some 23 per cent of mammals, 25 per cent of conifers and 32 per cent of amphibians are threatened with extinction. 100 to 300 species may be becoming extinct every year. At least one out of every eight plant species worldwide is threatened with extinction. Ancestral culture and knowledge are being threatened. For some experts we are on the eve of the greatest extinction of life on the Planet.

Faced with the frightening reality of biodiversity loss, 101 Heads of State and Government gathered at the 1992 Rio Summit witnessed the birth of the Convention on Biological Diversity: the Convention on Life on Earth. Ten years later in Johannesburg,

110 Heads of State committed themselves to "achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth." This 2010 Biodiversity Target was reconfirmed by 154 Heads of State at the 2005 World Summit Review, held in New York in September 2005. Through this commitment, the leaders of the world have made it crystal clear that the Millennium Development Goals and the fight against poverty and hunger will not be achieved without winning the battle against environmental degradation and depletion of the biodiversity capital of our planet.

Fourteen years after the Rio Summit, the Convention on Biological Diversity is coming back to Brazil following the convening of 278 meetings and the adoption of 192 decisions, contained in a 1,039-page handbook. The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will take place in the city of Curitiba under the motto of "enhanced implementation phase". I would like therefore to pay tribute to the Heads of State and other leaders who have decided to share their vision through the articles contained in this Convention's magazine specially designed and prepared to mark the Curitiba biodiversity event.

The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties takes place at an important juncture in the life of the Convention aimed at promoting a paradigm shift from policy development to enhanced implementation and tangible results. This meeting could not have found a better host than the city of Curitiba known as the most innovative city in the world and the ecological capital of Brazil. Mr. David Orr was indeed right to say that "when we heal the Earth we heal ourselves". It is therefore not surprising to note

that the city with 50 square metres of forest per citizen is also the health capital of Brazil and hosts 90% of its health-related events.

The "GINCANA" spirit of the people of Curitiba, working hard with a sense of fulfillment, has certainly contributed to making this city an inspiration for the world. I sincerely hope that the spirit of GINCANA will inspire the 188 Parties attending the Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Let us together ensure that Curitiba will be remembered by future generations as the birthplace of a new era of enhanced implementation of the Convention and the nest for a renewed global partnership for fulfilling the Heads of State promise of achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target and winning the battle for Life on Earth. In doing so, let us all be guided by the wisdom of the custodians of the Earth "Take care of the Earth and she will take care of you." We owe it to ourselves. We owe it also to our children.





Investing in our natural capital: environmental and economic forces are falling into step

A crucial economic conference is taking place in Brazil this month which has a lot to do with whether humankind is running Planet Earth at a profit or at a loss.

It has a lot to do with whether humanity will continue to house, shelter and feed itself or plunge headlong into receivership and ultimately bankruptcy.

For some, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) may seem as far away from a corporate board meeting as stroll in the park.

But the governments and delegates represent over six billion shareholders—the population of the planet—who, especially in the developing world, are crying out for a better return on “nature’s capital”.

They are calling out for a more efficient management of natural resources and an end to the business-as-usual model that is triggering an unprecedented depletion of the Earth’s life support systems.

I believe that we meet in Curitiba at a cross roads where finally the environmental and economic forces are falling into step.

Where governments are waking up to the reality that the goods and services nature provides—from the carbon soaking power of forests, the fishery production and coastal defense features of coral reefs, the pollution filtering and water storage potential of wetlands up to the nutrient recycling of the soils—are not limitless, free and indestructible.

They are finite, have hard-nosed economic value and can, if pushed too far into the red, fail and falter.

It is a message ringing out from the rapidly developing countries like China and India who have come to recognize that environmental degradation is now the bottleneck to their economic development.

It is a message that is good to send loud and clear from Curitiba, Brazil, where the government here is clear that the environment is not a luxury good.

But that nature or nature capital needs to be ranked right up there with human and financial capital.

This eighth Conference of the Parties comes with a head of steam fueled

in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) where governments agreed to reverse the rate if loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Over the past months the centrality of the environment as one of the crucial pillars upon which the 2015 Millennium Development Goals will stand or fall, has become common currency.

Minted in the ground-breaking Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) compiled by over 1,300 experts and printed in the Poverty and Environment Partnership report to the 2005 World Summit in New York last September.

Underlined in the chairman’s summary of the Special Session of UNEP’s Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Dubai in February in respect to the world’s biggest industry—tourism.

A new report by UNEP’s World Conservation Monitoring Centre published in the run up to Dubai. It notes that a coral reef may be worth up to a million US dollars a square kilometer, but only if sandy beaches are maintained for divers and other tourists.

Another, to be presented to this conference by the UNEP-linked Convention on Migratory Species, also underlines the multi million dollar importance of nature from whale shark watching in the Seychelles to bat watching in Texas in the United States.

And there is much more. The MA calculates that an intact wetland in Canada is worth \$6,000 a hectare versus \$2,000 a hectare for one cleared for intensive agriculture.

Intact tropical mangroves, coastal ecosystems that are nurseries for fish, natural pollution filters and coastal defenses, are worth around \$1,000 a hectare. Cleared for shrimp farms, the value falls to around \$200 a hectare.

The Assessment also puts a value on peat bogs and marshlands. It estimates that the Muthurajawela Marsh, a more than 3,000 hectare coastal bog in Sri Lanka, is worth an estimated \$5 million a year as a result of services such as local flood control.

Losses as a result of damage by alien invasive species in the Cape Floral region

of South Africa are calculated at around \$2,000 a hectare.

The annual recreational value of coral reefs in the six Marine Management Areas of the Hawaiian islands ranges from \$300,000 to tens of millions of dollars a year.

Studies from Algeria, Italy, Portugal, Syria and Tunisia also point to the value of intact forests.

These estimate that the value of the timber and fuel-wood from a forest is worth less than a third when compared with the value of their services from watershed protection and recreation, to the absorption of pollutants like greenhouse gases.

The burning of 10 million hectares of Indonesia’s forests in the late 1990s cost an estimated \$9 billion as a result of factors including increased healthcare and tourism losses.

There are also new findings on the link between the spread of disease and environmental destruction. The provision of treated bed nets, the better availability of low cost anti-malarial drugs and the development of vaccines are crucial but so are healthy ecosystems.

Studies in the Amazon by researchers at Johns Hopkins University in the United States have concluded that for every one per cent increase in deforestation, there is an eight per cent increase in the number of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

This has implications for human health but also to economic development. It is calculated that Africa’s Gross National Product (GNP) in 2000 could have been 25 per cent or \$100 billion higher if malaria had been eradicated 35 years ago.

The previously mentioned Poverty and Environment Partnership report also underlines that conservation and targeted investment in degraded ecosystems can have excellent rate of return.

Every dollar invested in fighting land degradation and desertification may conservatively generate over three dollars in economic benefits helping to fight poverty among the millions living on fragile lands.

Money could be spent on such traditional and soil conserving features as terracing.

Conservation of habitats and ecosystems is also cost effective when compared with the short term profits from environmentally damaging activities such as dynamite fishing, mining and sedimentation as a result of deforestation in the interior.

A study of coral reefs in the Caribbean indicates that sustainable harvesting of coral fish for food and industries such as the pet and aquaria trade may be worth \$300 million a year, coral-based tourism just over \$2 billion annually and shoreline protection from reefs up to \$2.2 billion a year.

However, these economic benefits are threatened by damage and degradation amounting to between \$350 million and \$870 million a year.

Overall for every dollar invested in coral reef conservation economic returns will total up to \$5.

Meanwhile the carbon storage or “sequestration” potential of forests ranges between \$360 and \$2,200 per hectare which makes them worth far more than if they are converted to grazing or cropland.

Indeed once carbon reaches over \$30 a ton it becomes far more cost effective to conserve forests than to clear them.

Natural capital also serves as back up against calamities such as droughts or crop failures. Studies from Brazil show that farmers in the Amazon’s Tapajos National Park turn to forest products such as nuts and berries when crop yields tumble.

In other words, the forest acts as a kind of nature-based insurance policy for those denied access to formal insurance and financial markets.

Among the issues that need to be resolved is the creation of markets, reflecting the value of natural capital. These need to be fostered by governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in areas such as carbon trading, eco tourism and the often thorny issue of access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

Payments for nature may also offer a way forward such as those being pioneered by hydropower companies who pay for forest conservation on rivers upstream.

Local people must also be part of the equation so that the ‘environmental assets’ are managed in people and poverty-friendly ways.

It has been calculated that tropical forests are worth some \$60 billion a year as a result of their carbon removal activities alone which are helping in the fight against global warming.



But these forests, found in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo or Indonesia, are only valued as timber resources rather than for their even more valuable carbon sequestration services.

Thus governments and local people have less incentive to conserve them and more incentive to cut them down. So how can we pay local people for standing forests?

A pre-requisite for much of this is a stable, corruption-free government that respects the rule of law and fosters efficient and accountable public services and streamlined regulations.

Poor-friendly property rights must also be urgently addressed and case studies examined on what does and does not work. Extending financial credit during times of trouble may also help ensure that, out of desperation, poor people are not forced to over use and run down their ‘natural capital’.

Another important issue is that of the more than \$1 trillion trade subsidies and trade barriers in rich countries.

Subsidies on traded goods from developed economies perpetuate poverty which in turn can trigger environmental degradation in the developing world.

Meanwhile, subsidies or poor pricing policies in poorer countries tend to lead to environmental degradation. For example irrigation subsidies often lead to inefficient use of supplies that in turn triggers effects like water logging and salt contamination of soils.

If we are to overcome poverty, tackle disease, empower women, deliver safe

and sufficient quantities of drinking water—in short meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2010—then we need more hospitals, teachers, toilets and taps.

But as I hope that it is now crystal clear we also need to work with nature, its assets and the Earth’s life support systems because they lie at the basis of all we wish to achieve for long lasting and stable livelihoods, economies and societies.

The 8th Conference of the Parties knows that achieving the 2010 target on biodiversity is a tough call.

There are also the perennial questions of science. Questions like whether we have the right indicators to properly monitor implementation.

Debates about whether our network of protected areas honestly reflects the biodiversity we want to conserve and to bolster.

Science has an important role and must be continued. Good science is a good guide. But it must also not be an alibi for inaction.

As the great economist Keynes said: “I would rather be roughly right, than precisely wrong”.

So let’s start really investing and reinvesting in our natural capital and live off the interest rather than off a limited principle.

So that all shareholders can harvest the economic, cultural and spiritual fruits this extraordinary planet offers.

It is the prerequisite for overcoming poverty and of ultimately achieving a stable and more peaceful world.

Anything less will shortchange this and future generations.



Honourable Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi,
Prime Minister of Malaysia

Biodiversity usage must be characterized by both sustainability and fair play

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), adopted in Rio in 1992, is an important environmental treaty for the global community. It offers a platform for nations to jointly address issues related to loss of biodiversity and its sustainable use. As one of the 12 most bio-diverse countries in the world, Malaysia is proud to be a participant in this international effort as well as the host of the Seventh Meeting of the Confer-

expand the frontiers of knowledge and pursue discoveries which could help improve the health and wellness of the world's population. The challenge is to fulfil both imperatives wisely, safely and fairly.

Consequently, Malaysia takes judicious biodiversity management seriously. In Rio, Malaysia pledged that 50% of Malaysia's land areas would be kept under forest and tree cover. In point of fact, 74% of our cur-

cial and technical assistance for developing countries. There is as yet still a significant gap between noble intentions and the capacity to see them through.

However, it is encouraging to observe the progress that has been made, notably the advances made by the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing recently in establishing an international framework for access and benefit sharing,

IN THE ENDEAVOR TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE POPULATION, WE BECOME INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO BALANCE COMPETING REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE.



ence of Parties (COP7) to the CBD and the First Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Bio-Safety.

"Invest in Tomorrow, Protect Today" was the theme of COP7. The theme well encapsulates the premise of the CBD namely, the conservation of biological diversity, its sustainable use as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from biological resources. These principles resonate greatly especially to nature-endowed developing countries such as Malaysia. In the endeavor to achieve economic growth and a better quality of life for the population, we become increasingly aware of the need to balance competing requirements in order to safeguard the future.

It is crucial to preserve our rich biological heritage, both for the enjoyment of future generations as well as for the benefits to the ecosystem. However, it is also important to

rent land mass is under green cover. Malaysia has also since launched a National Policy on Biological Diversity and established a dedicated ministry on the environment. As Prime Minister, I also chair the National Council on Biodiversity and Biotechnology, a coordinating council which considers biotechnology development issues against the requirements of biodiversity preservation.

It has now been more than a decade since the CBD came into force. Malaysia, as well as other developing countries, is continuously improving the legislative and enforcement environment related to biodiversity use and preservation. However, we are also aware that much more must be done. The many resolutions, programs and targets of the CBD must be translated into action.

This can only be realized if countries have adequate capacity for implementation. This, as agreed upon in Rio, calls for finan-

as mandated by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Biodiversity usage must be characterized by both sustainability and fair play. There must be win-win solutions for those who own biodiversity resources or knowledge and for those who possess the means to develop them commercially. There must also be precautionary measures to ensure that biodiversity is not threatened by unrestrained access.

In charting our course, it is important to remember not only the interdependence between man and his environment, but also the greater purpose underlying our natural endowments. We must care for the environment but at the same time, endeavor to avail ourselves of the wonders contained in nature for the benefit of the world's inhabitants. We must strive to achieve on both counts, with information, knowledge and wisdom.

The path to reconciling man with nature

Welcome to Brazil and to Curitiba!

The Brazilian Government is proud to be host to the largest meeting ever of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The City of Curitiba is a leader, in Brazil, in environmentally sound solutions and it is situated in the heart of one of the richest and most endangered biomes in the world—the Atlantic Rain Forest. The name Curitiba means the place of the Araucaria Forest, according to the indigenous peoples that once lived here. It is, therefore, an appropriate place to bring together environmental leaders from around the world to debate the fate of life on Planet Earth.

In Curitiba, we shall have the opportunity to debate such important issues as the biodiversity of oceanic islands, the biodiversity of arid and sub-humid lands, forest biodiversity, agrobiodiversity, the biodiversity of inland waters and the biodiversity of coastal and marine zones. The biggest challenge in the agenda is achieving the 2010 target of significantly reducing the current rates of biodiversity loss by year 2010, in only a few more years. Also crucial will be the debates on the implementation mechanisms such as the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), the Communication, Education and Public Awareness Initiative (CEPA), the Financial Mechanism (GEF), the economic incentives, the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and mechanisms for supporting capacity building.

I believe that the discussions on the International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing are particularly important. The regime may well be the most effective and exemplary way of addressing, in an integrated manner, the three objectives of the Convention: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. I am absolutely convinced that moving towards the adoption of this International Regime will be a major affirmation of the commitment of all Parties to the Convention, and as the Pres-

ident of the Conference, I will spare no efforts to do so.

It is a vast agenda, which required a long and extensive preparatory process to which many have contributed. I would like, however, to stress the urgency of these issues. According to the conclusions of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, commissioned by the United Nations, never in the recent geological past has so much biodiversity been lost than in the past 50 years and, even more worrying, all future scenarios point to an accelerated loss of biodiversity and of the goods and services it provides over the next decades. If these projections prove to be true, we shall witness the Sixth Event of Mass Extinction on Planet Earth, the last of which occurred 65 million years ago, when more than 40% of all animal genera were extinguished, including all dinosaurs. We still have not reached these catastrophic levels, but if current extinction rates, 100 to 1000 times that of natural levels, are maintained or increased throughout the 21st Century, such an outcome will be inevitable. Unlike previous mass extinction events, the current one is a product of human activities—deforestation, fires, pollution, overexploitation, greenhouse effect and invasive alien species, a result of disproportional population growth, of socioeconomic inequalities and of unsustainable consumption.

The challenge we shall face during COP8 is to find the means to implement the agreed commitments. Most biodiversity is found in tropical regions where impoverished people live and where governments cope with severe constraints. The challenge is to build a world of greater solidarity, where each person takes on their common but differentiated responsibilities more effectively. We need to forge a pact to implement the CBD and to build solid partnerships among the various sectors of society. If we fail to promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity and to engage the many stakeholders we will not succeed in implementing the three objectives of the CDB and its 2010 target.

Convinced of this, Brazil has supported several international and national initiatives that aim to enhance the role of biodiver-



sity in agriculture, nutrition, health and the economy, and in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000.

We are at a turning point between the end of an era and the recognition of a new cycle. Different indicators attest to a rate of exploitation of land and water ecosystems incompatible with the capacity of regenerating life on Earth. Concentration of wealth and the consumption patterns of the wealthy world muddy the path to the future and raise questions about the destiny of mankind. The abyss between rich and poor countries has increased twofold over the past forty years. Inequality leaves different imprints in nature. Among the poor nations, the ecological footprint is exerted on the equivalent of two hectares per inhabitant. In rich countries, however, it is more than six hectares per capita.

Brazil builds its environmental policy in harmony with its planetary responsibilities and the urgent social demands of its people. It couldn't be any other way. We have the fifth largest population in the world. We have the second largest forest area of the globe. Green covers more than 64% of our territory. Our forests protect 20% of the freshwater that flows on Earth. And in addition, we are home to about one fifth of the global biodiversity.

We are one of the nations with the largest protected area, preserving fauna, flora and ecosystems. Currently 63.8 million hectares of federal protected areas are found in our territory—15.7 million (24.6%) added by the current Administration. Additionally, 22

million hectares are conserved in state protected areas. A map of 900 priority areas for biodiversity in all our biomes—selected by a thousand scientists and conservationists—guides our policies for biodiversity protection, research, conservation, sustainable use and restoration. In ten years, 50 million hectares of protected areas will have been created in the Amazon by the Amazon Protected Areas Program, which has many international organizations and entities as partners.

Comparable efforts are taking place in other biodiversity-rich countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. These conservation efforts require significant financial investments which must be shared with the industrialized countries that have a high consumption of natural resources. These investments are capable of promoting sustainable development and peace. Therefore, proposals such as the establishment of a “Global Forest Fund”, which we have been defending in recent years in global fora, are of vital relevance.

The virtuoso interweaving that can and should bring such a broad environmental policy closer to the respect for ethnic diversity and to the legitimate rights of indigenous peoples, finds in this government a point of convergence for its fruition. Last

year alone we demarcated one million seven hundred and forty-three thousand hectares of the Raposa/Serra do Sol Reserve. In the past two years, we have signed into law 55 reserves, out of a total of 600 existing in the country, consolidating, in this way, an indigenous territory of one million square kilometers, which encompasses 11% of the country and a cultural mosaic of 170 indigenous peoples.

Some of the hope which the world places in the new century has its eyes turned to new ways of living and producing, which the current stage of renewal in Brazil encourages and announces. In the Amazon region, the equation for this future finds the fascination of a territory which brings together five million square kilometers of forests and water and almost twenty million people.

When we started this government under the leadership of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, this equation was being solved through a deforestation dynamic, which grew at a rate of 27% a year. Since the second half of 2004, we have been implementing strict law enforcement in addition to measures for land use and tenure. The results have just started to show, but they already reveal a drop in the speed of deforestation. The annual deforestation rate dropped by 31% last year. We launched the largest operation ever

against illegal deforestation in the Amazon. Last June, a criminal organization that promoted illegal logging, valued at US\$ 350 million dollars, was dismantled.

Nevertheless, the future of the largest tropical forest on Earth cannot be treated only as a criminal case. We need to complement monitoring and law enforcement with social and economic incentives to promote forest conservation and sustainable use. This is the objective of our policy for the sustainable management of public forests. Over the next ten years, this new policy will place 13 million hectares (3% of the Amazon) under a controlled management system which restricts logging to six trees per hectare every 30 years—ensuring a long cycle of regeneration for the species and reconciling the rhythm of nature with human demands.

I hope that all our visitors enjoy their stay in Curitiba, actively participating in the negotiations and the numerous debates in the almost 300 Side Events and in the more than 40 Associated Events and still find time to visit the precious Atlantic Rainforest Protected Areas around Curitiba and its splendid public parks, museums and theaters. This diversity of events is proof of the Brazilian passion for biodiversity and the richness of initiatives of the Brazilian people.





Gérald Tremblay, *Mayor of the City of Montreal*

Message du Maire de Montréal



Vous êtes présentement réunis à Curitiba, au Brésil, pour participer à la 8ème Conférence des parties à la Convention sur la diversité biologique. Vous répondez ainsi à l'appel du secrétaire exécutif de cette Convention, monsieur Ahmed Djoghlaïf de créer une alliance mondiale en faveur de la biodiversité.

À titre de maire de la ville hôte du secrétariat de cette Convention, je vous adresse mes salutations les plus amicales. Les enjeux dont vous allez débattre sont d'une importance fondamentale pour l'avenir de l'humanité. Le foisonnement de la vie sur la Terre est la plus importante richesse qui nous ait été léguée et aucun effort ne doit être ménagé pour la préserver.

Je saisis cette occasion pour saluer bien chaleureusement le maire Carlos Alberto Richa et toute la population de Curitiba, une ville renommée pour ses nombreuses innovations dans le domaine urbain. Les Montréalais et les Montréalaises s'associent à moi pour souhaiter que la tenue de cette grande rencontre internationale qui se tient sur votre territoire devienne une source de rapprochement entre nos deux villes.

Mes meilleurs vœux pour le succès de vos délibérations vous accompagnent.



Carlos Alberto Richa, *Mayor of the City of Curitiba*

Message from the Mayor of Curitiba

This is a major opportunity for you to participate in a debate that is fundamental for the future of our planet and, at the same time, get to know this city that I have the honour of administrating. Come and see why Curitiba has become an important reference among the cities of the world, an example of creativity and respect for citizens, of progress and environmental conservation, of hospitality and life in harmony among different peoples. Your visit will be, for us, a reason for joy. You will finally understand why people speak so well of Curitiba all over the world. Welcome. You will be received with open arms.





Son Excellence Monsieur Abdelaziz Bouteflika,
Président de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire

La conservation de la biodiversité doit faire partie des préoccupations des opérateurs économiques et décideurs politiques

C'EST EN POSSÉDANT LA CAPACITÉ DE CONNAÎTRE, DE PROTÉGER ET DE DÉVELOPPER SES RESSOURCES QUE L'ON DONNE LE PLUS DE CHANCE DE VAINCRE LE SOUS-DÉVELOPPEMENT ET LA PAUVRETÉ TOUT EN ÉVITANT LA DILAPIDATION DE SON PATRIMOINE NATUREL.

La conservation de la biodiversité n'est pas seulement l'affaire des écologistes et naturalistes, elle doit faire partie des préoccupations essentielles des opérateurs économiques et des décideurs politiques.

Il est en effet évident aujourd'hui que la détérioration de la diversité biologique dans une région donnée n'est pas sans incidences sérieuses sur l'équilibre des écosystèmes mondiaux, et met ainsi en péril à la fois le cadre de vie et le potentiel économique si précieuses pour les générations présentes et futures.

Il y a 34 ans, la communauté internationale réunie à Stockholm a permis une prise de conscience de l'environnement et a tiré dans le même temps la sonnette d'alarme devant l'état périlleux de la terre et de ses ressources.

Depuis, l'environnement qui recèle les ressources physiques et les écosystèmes dont l'humanité dépend pour sa survie, continue de se dégrader et la planète a subi des atteintes multiples résultant du quadruplement de la population mondiale et de la multiplication par 20 de la production économique mondiale.

La Convention de Rio de Janeiro admet la souveraineté des pays sur leurs ressources génétiques. Cette initiative mondiale reconnaît l'immense valeur des richesses biologiques du Sud et la nécessité "d'offrir une compensation" aux nations sous-développées pour les ressources dont elles font don, depuis des siècles, au monde industrialisé.

Malheureusement, tous les progrès réalisés par les nations du Sud, en direction d'une juste compensation pour leurs ressources biologiques, sont silencieusement érodés par les efforts que les nations industrialisées déploient pour s'approprier le monopole de nouveaux produits et procédés biotechnologiques.

L'Afrique entend jouer pleinement son rôle à travers la mise en oeuvre du NEPAD. Son plan d'action sur l'environnement vise à sortir le continent du cercle vicieux de la pauvreté et de la dégradation de l'environnement et plus particulièrement la diversité biologique. Il a aussi pour finalité de contribuer à la conservation du capital écologique de l'humanité et d'atteindre l'un des plus importants objectifs du millénaire pour le développement qui consiste à assurer un environnement durable; objectif qui ne peut être atteint avec les schémas de consommation et d'exploitation d'aujourd'hui.

Consciente de l'importance de ces problèmes, l'Algérie a procédé dès le 6 juin 1995, à la ratification de la Convention sur la diversité biologique qui appelle à "la conservation de la diversité biologique, l'utilisation durable de ses éléments et le partage juste et équitable des avantages découlant de l'exploitation des ressources génétiques". Elle a également créé dans ses structures gouvernementales, des institutions capables de prendre en charge la gestion de la diversité biologique et atteindre l'objectif de 2010 adopté par la Conférence des Parties lors de sa sixième réunion.

Dans son patrimoine naturel, elle accorde une place privilégiée aux ressources biologiques et à leur diversité. Ces dernières forment le constituant vivant des ressources naturelles avec leurs logiques d'existence, de croissance, de reproduction et de transformation. Elles dérivent de l'organisation interne du patrimoine, de ses sensibilités, de ses aptitudes et de ses potentialités à utiliser l'environnement global dans toutes ses facettes.

Une action déterminée de protection de la nature s'est mise en place progressivement à travers le rapport national sur l'environnement et le plan national d'action pour l'environnement et le développement dura-

ble qui vise l'amélioration du cadre de vie et l'augmentation de la productivité du capital naturel en veillant à sa sauvegarde.

Le plan national d'action pour l'environnement et le développement durable a été intégré dans la loi 03-10 du 19 juillet 2003 relative à la protection de l'environnement dans le cadre du développement durable qui constitue l'instrument de base pour la définition et le suivi de la politique environnementale du pays et qui se fonde sur le principe de préservation de la diversité biologique et celui de non-dégradation des ressources naturelles.

Cette action déterminée s'est également traduite par l'élaboration de la stratégie nationale de conservation et d'utilisation durable de la diversité biologique.

Par ailleurs, l'Algérie a signé le Protocole de Cartagena sur la Prévention des risques biotechnologiques en mai 2000 et l'a ratifié le 8 juin 2004.

Pour la mise en oeuvre de ce protocole, l'Algérie en tant qu'utilisateur et consommateur des produits biotechnologiques a élaboré le Cadre National de Biosécurité.

C'est avec un plaisir particulier que nous avons accueilli l'invitation faite à l'Algérie pour être le point central de la célébration au titre du Continent Africain, de la journée internationale de la diversité biologique, le 22 mai 2006 sous le thème: "Accomplir l'objectif 2010: la protection de la biodiversité dans les terres arides".

La huitième réunion de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur la diversité biologique qui se tiendra du 20 au 31 mars 2006 à Curitiba (Brésil) permettra d'évaluer les efforts accomplis dans la mise en oeuvre de la Convention sur la diversité biologique depuis la dernière réunion et de prendre d'autres décisions pour la sauvegarde de nos ressources biologiques qui constituent un enjeu planétaire tant sur les plans stratégique, économique, social, écologique et scientifique nécessitant une conception globale et une réponse solidaire.

C'est en possédant la capacité de connaître, de protéger et de développer ses ressources que l'on donne le plus de chance de vaincre le sous-développement et la pauvreté tout en évitant la dilapidation de son patrimoine naturel.



Jacques Chirac, *Président de la République française*

L'action internationale au service de la biodiversité

LA PRÉSERVATION DE LA BIODIVERSITÉ EST
AUJOURD'HUI UN DÉFI MONDIAL, UNE EXIGENCE
DE RESPONSABILITÉ ET DE SOLIDARITÉ.

La crise qui affecte le patrimoine naturel est sans précédent : au rythme actuel des pertes que nous infligeons à la biodiversité, la moitié des espèces vivantes aura disparu d'ici à la fin de ce siècle.

Depuis le Sommet de Rio, en 1992, l'humanité a commencé à prendre la mesure de cette menace qui, au même titre que le changement climatique, pèse aujourd'hui sur l'avenir de notre planète. Toujours plus nombreux sur un espace fini aux ressources limitées, nous devons aujourd'hui inventer un nouveau mode de développement durable compatible avec la préservation des écosystèmes, afin de ne pas souffrir demain de leur disparition. Au-delà de la perte écologique irréversible que représenterait l'extinction des baleines, des grands singes d'Afrique, mais aussi de nombreuses plantes et micro-organismes, les enjeux sociaux de la préservation de la biodiversité sont immenses. Le développement économique des pays du Nord comme du Sud, mais aussi le bien-être des générations futures, à travers notamment la recherche médicale, en dépendent.

Avec la Convention sur la diversité biologique, la communauté internationale s'est donnée pour objectif d'enrayer l'érosion du vivant d'ici 2010. De nombreux pays, dépositaires d'une extraordinaire part du patrimoine biologique mondial, ont commencé à prendre les nécessaires mesures de protection.

La France, pour sa part, consciente des devoirs que lui impose son exceptionnelle richesse biologique, a engagé un effort sans précédent pour préserver la diversité de ses écosystèmes en adoptant, en 2005, une stratégie nationale sur la biodiversité et, en 2006, une nouvelle loi sur les parcs naturels qui permettra la création, d'ici la fin de cette année, des parcs nationaux de la Réunion et de Guyane. Cet engagement s'est aussi traduit par l'accélération de la procédure de

classement de la grande barrière de corail de Nouvelle Calédonie, le renforcement du Conservatoire du Littoral, le renforcement de la lutte contre les trafics d'animaux protégés et une coopération accrue avec les pays du Bassin du Congo pour la gestion durable de la forêt tropicale.

Pourtant, face à un phénomène de destruction qui s'accélère avec la mondialisation, la communauté internationale doit aller beaucoup plus loin dans la prise de conscience et dans l'action. Alors que les conséquences du réchauffement climatique paraissent désormais comprises par l'opinion publique, les médias et l'ensemble des décideurs politiques, il n'en va pas encore de même pour la biodiversité. Cette différence de perception tient principalement à l'état beaucoup plus avancé de la recherche dans le domaine du climat. Le travail remarquable des scientifiques du monde entier, associés au sein du Groupement intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat, le GIEC, a permis d'établir un consensus scientifique international sur la réalité et les conséquences du réchauffement, que beaucoup, au départ, se refusaient à admettre. Le GIEC a également permis d'informer l'opinion publique des dangers imminents liés au changement climatique.

C'est en vertu de cette expérience que j'ai souhaité organiser à Paris, en janvier 2005, la Conférence internationale « Biodiversité : Science et Gouvernance », afin de promouvoir un dialogue mondial entre scientifiques, décideurs politiques, représentants de la société civile et acteurs économiques du Sud comme du Nord. Cette conférence a permis de lancer un processus de concertation sur l'utilité d'un nouveau mécanisme international d'expertise sur la biodiversité, similaire au GIEC.

L'appui de la communauté scientifique à ce projet démontre à quel point un tel débat

est aujourd'hui nécessaire. Il ne doit cependant pas être circonscrit aux seuls experts. C'est pourquoi un Comité de pilotage international a été constitué, regroupant tout à la fois des scientifiques, des gouvernements, des organisations internationales et des représentants de la société civile, dans une composition aussi équilibrée que possible. Je me réjouis qu'une présentation de l'état d'avancement de ses travaux puisse être faite à Curitiba, à l'occasion de la 8^{ème} Conférence des Parties de la Convention sur la diversité biologique.

Mieux connaître ces phénomènes à l'échelle globale et régionale ne suffira pourtant pas. Améliorer l'efficacité de la gouvernance mondiale, régionale et locale en matière de biodiversité est tout aussi nécessaire. Le chemin parcouru depuis la négociation de la Convention sur la diversité biologique en 1992 est considérable. Pourtant, malgré la Convention, malgré ses plans, malgré ses décisions, la perte de biodiversité, loin de ralentir, se poursuit. Face à cette situation, il nous faut d'urgence intensifier l'action internationale et en améliorer l'efficacité. C'est à ce prix que l'objectif collectif que nous nous sommes fixé sera atteint.

Premier pays au monde à avoir intégré une Charte de l'Environnement dans sa Constitution, la France entend poursuivre résolument son action au service de la diversité du vivant, en métropole comme dans ses départements et territoires d'Outre-Mer. Au-delà de ses frontières, elle continuera à s'engager, à titre bilatéral et multilatéral, pour la préservation de la biodiversité. Cet engagement, nous entendons le conduire aux côtés des pays du Sud, dépositaires d'un patrimoine exceptionnel dont ils dépendent pour leur développement, car la préservation de la biodiversité est aujourd'hui un défi mondial, une exigence de responsabilité et de solidarité.



My thoughts and vision of a world: forever habitable by God's creatures in an environment that is free from pollution and natural resources degradation

As the Head of State of The Gambia, a small country in West Africa, my thoughts and vision of a world that is forever habitable by God's creatures in an environment that is free from pollution and natural resources degradation are forever growing clearer. My vision is of a world treated with loving care for the sustenance of the present generation of people that inhabit it and who in turn will pass it on to future generations. A world where each nation views its neighbour as an equal in maintaining the integrity of the environment taking fully into account the Rio principles including, in particular, the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities".

I wish to express my vision from the context of my address to the 9th Special Session of UNEP Governing Council/Global Environment Ministerial Forum (GC/GEMF) held from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where I read the Declaration adopted in the margins of the recently concluded African Union Summit in the Sudan in January 2006 by the six Heads of State in Africa involved in the piloting of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP). This Declaration constitutes an authoritative political statement from the African continent's leadership, and emphasizes the importance of the process as a means of uplifting the many poor people in Africa.

Adopted by the 23rd Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the BSP is aimed as a means of assisting developing countries such as The Gambia to address their capacity building and technology support needs in the field of the environment. It will provide specific answers necessary for a holistic approach to technology support and capacity development in African countries and the other regions of the world. Thus, it is accorded a high degree of political commitment by the African Union and our institutions spearheading the New Partnership for Africa's Development as well as the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN).



As the leader of one of the pilot countries, I would like to share my hope and aspirations on this important process for us in Africa. From the perspective of my country, the BSP emphasizes the principles of transparency and accountability. It also provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening the capacities of governments of developing countries to implement the programmatic goals not only of the UNEP Governing Council but the international community at large. The Plan enables developing countries to strengthen development frameworks, and to enable us to pursue coherent national and international environmental policies. It is our hope that the BSP will enable us to comply with international agreements and obligations at the national levels particularly in Africa. We certainly see the Plan as an excellent opportunity for enhancing our attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation which we adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The Plan has several other benefits:

- It is an important vehicle for promoting South-South Cooperation.
- It facilitates the ability of governments to ensure coherence in the approach of the United Nations to technology support and capacity building. In this respect we are pleased that UNEP and the UNDP have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, and it is my hope that the UNDP at the national level in African countries will seize this opportunity to integrate with the national processes that

address the environment on the African continent.

- The Plan also makes it easier for us in Africa to build capacities to enable our countries to fully adhere to our obligations within the framework of the Multilateral Environment Agreements.
- The BSP also makes it easier for us to enter into strategic partnerships on capacity building with the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In addition to the GEF, other cooperation partners, particularly those developed economies that practice a policy of solidarity with the developing countries, especially with respect to countries in the African region. This new culture of international solidarity is absolutely essential to the achievement of the MDGs.

In view of the above, therefore, the responsibility on the part of our countries in this process is to reciprocate the good will of our cooperation partners by ensuring that the opportunities they provide and the enabling environment we create through our national and international foreign policies are fully utilized in ways that conform to internationally acceptable standards.

In order to meet the high expectations of the international community and on behalf of the signatories of the Declaration i.e. the Heads of State for the six pilot countries in the region, we shall be keeping our development cooperation partners fully informed of those areas where we are making progress and on specific aspects where we may require assistance.

Global partnership: the role of the Three Major Forest Ecosystems of the World in conserving and preserving the world's biological diversity (Amazon Basin, Congo River Basin and Southeast Asia)

The international community has continued to have a shared and vital responsibility to ensure successful conservation and preservation of the global environment for future posterity. Indeed, active participation by several world leaders in different World Summits such as the Millennium Summit of the United Nations (2000), World Summit for Sustainable Development (2002) and the recent World Summit (2005) have resulted in strategic environmental actions. In Africa, the Heads of State of the African Union adopted the Action Plan for the Environmental Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in Maputo in 2003, thus bearing further witness to similar willingness to address and tackle environmental threats at the global level.

Global responsibility

Nevertheless, despite tremendous achievements in assessing the problems and challenges facing the world's environment, practical implementation by various actors is often not achieved. As a result, the poor management of natural resources in one country not only results in catastrophic damage to that country, but also affects the

entire world. A glaring loophole has been the lack of cooperation by the stakeholders in implementing the strategies laid out as a result of these crucial Summits. Another drawback to environmental management has been egoism and selfishness of our leaders resulting in indifference in providing the required resources to implement the environmental actions. If leaders decide to engage only in 'talk' but refrain from committing the required financial resources, then forces of environmental destruction will only continue. This therefore calls for generosity for our planet, our environment, by leaders the world over, a greater involvement by the civil society and more commitment from international organizations.

A good illustration of generosity for the environment, which is worth emulating by other countries, can be demonstrated by looking at the Republic of Costa Rica, where the necessary mechanisms have been put in place to promote the preservation efforts of the forest ecosystems. For instance, debt has been cancelled, and the resources saved through such cancellation are then used to finance conservation projects and promote eco-tourism. Another good exam-

ple of sustainable management of forests is the Republic of Congo, which will be the first country in the world to receive certification of forest concessions in the region. Indeed, as early as the 1970's, transplanting techniques for cloning eucalyptus to conserve forests were first practised in Pointe-Noire, Congo on a large scale, and to date several countries (Brazil, South Africa, Portugal) have adapted and benefited from the use of this transfer technology.

In addition, in view of Prof. Wangari Maathai's initiative for Africa, I believe we can all support and practice the "MOTTAINAI" philosophy, to better conserve our environment and biological diversity. Firstly introduced in Japan, "MOTTAINAI", is an old Buddhist tradition that exhorts people of the world to respect natural resources, not to waste them and to conserve for posterity. This concept with its three pillars of reducing, reusing and recycling should be revived and adopted by all of us, as it symbolizes the generosity, the gratitude and the respect we owe to our Mother Nature, the Earth. We need to take advantage of the "MOTTAINAI" philosophy and be inspired and guided to change our culture and involve people at individual level to take responsibility. Africa and the rest of the world should strongly embark in the "MOTTAINAI" campaign for better management of our environmental resources. To make it a global campaign we are inviting all the United Nations bodies linked to environmental issues to lead the campaign, as well as governments at national level.

Today, biodiversity conservation is recognized as one of the building blocks for sustainable development providing economic benefits, cultural and medicinal values among other things. We know that the largest population of the world, especially rural communities continually depends on natural resources and ecosystem services for their day-to-day subsistence and livelihoods. As such, biodiversity and environmental issues have become of global concern and most leaders worldwide are committed to sustainable management of the environment, for instance as shown by numerous Heads





of State committed to reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010.

In our view to significantly tackle this global environmental issue and reverse the loss of the rich local biodiversity, we need to focus on a more practical and holistic approach; an innovative global response involving all stakeholders so as to ensure that the world continues to enjoy the many services provided by ecosystem. So the tremendous role played by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as the key global initiative for the conservation

covers more than two and a half million square miles, more than any other rainforest and is richly endowed with millions of different plant and animal species. The forest has been recognized as an economic resource to be harnessed to aid national economic development in the South American region.

Another key biodiversity site, which is actually the second largest tropical rainforest after the South American Amazon, is the Congo River Basin, situated at the heart of Africa. Its area covers some 520 million ha and the Basin is the watershed of many African rivers draining into the Congo River and the Atlantic Ocean. Because of its sheer size, the Congo Basin greatly influences ecological functions, climate change and rainfall patterns not only in East and Central Africa, but globally.

The third tropical rainforest is found in the Southeast Asia region and is also a rich

Regional Initiatives in Central Africa, South America and Southeast Asia: key actors to reverse the loss of biodiversity

As we need to act globally today, my country, the Republic of Congo is delighted to share with you our vision for forging a global partnership to save our biodiversity for a better world for all. This initiative is a good example of a South-South co-operation between the three key institutions in Central Africa, South America and Southeast Asia.

Heads of States in Central Africa signed the Yaoundé Declaration in 1999 and initiated a regional process to better conserve and sustainably manage their forests and protect their rich and unique biodiversity. The United Nations General Assembly endorsed this regional initiative in 2000 through Resolution 52/214. Consequently, in 2002, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) was initiated and was led by USA, France, UK, South Africa, Italy, international NGOs and the countries of the Congo Basin region. To co-ordinate the development of environmental initiatives in Central Africa and to apply international conventions on forestry, COMIFAC and CBFP adopted together the Convergence Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa in 2004. The 10-year Convergence Plan is a common vision for a sustainable and joint management of Congo Basin forest natural resources for the well-being of their people, the preservation of biodiversity and protection of the global environment.

During the second Heads of State Summit in 2005 in Brazzaville, the treaty creating the Commission for Forest in Central Africa (COMIFAC) was signed and Prof. Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate, was appointed Goodwill Ambassador, mandated to promote and raise awareness to save our forests. Since then, several worldwide campaigns have been conducted among various partners for the promotion of forest conservation programmes in the region, especially through the financing and implementing of the Convergence Plan. We believe that our initiative to save the world's second largest forest paved the way for other world leaders to follow.

In South America, the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) established in 1995 has continued to promote joint actions towards the harmonious development of the Amazon Basin through shared

THIS CONCEPT OF “MOTTAINAI” WITH ITS THREE PILLARS OF REDUCING, REUSING AND RECYCLING SHOULD BE REVIVED AND ADOPTED BY ALL OF US, AS IT SYMBOLIZES THE GENEROSITY, THE GRATITUDE AND THE RESPECT WE OWE TO OUR MOTHER NATURE.

and sustainable use of biodiversity, continues to be the cornerstone of bringing together the global community under a legal framework to work in one accord. We applaud the new initiative being launched under the auspices of the Secretariat of the CBD, which aims at linking the three major forest ecosystems of the world (Amazon Basin, Congo River Basin and Southeast Asia), which are exceptional sanctuaries of biodiversity.

World's Green Lungs

In observing the map of the world, the best known of all tropical rainforests are to be found along the Amazon basin, the Congo River basin and the Southeast Asian region. They constitute a huge reservoir of biodiversity and are often referred to as the “world's green lung” because they release so much oxygen into the air, thus playing an immense role in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The Amazon Basin contains the world's greatest rainforest, with the Amazon River running 3,000 miles from the Andes to the sea, and is the largest single reserve of biological organisms in the world. The vast Amazon Basin

environmental heritage, often known for its species-rich terrestrial ecosystems. It is located on the equator and covers an area of over 1 million square miles, surrounded by water.

It is very clear that how each of these three major regions utilize and manage their natural resources ultimately affects the condition of the world's biodiversity. However, several challenges afflict these rich forest ecosystems including: human activities resulting from increased population growth, declining forest cover, illegal logging, land degradation, forest fires and violent conflict in forested regions. Nevertheless, with broad alliances of support from indigenous groups, smallholder farmers, environmentalists and governments, it is possible to conserve and preserve these world resources. All the countries in these three regions: South America, Central Africa and Southeast Asia are key global actors in sustainable management of the world's forests. Existing regional initiatives in these regions present a solid platform for setting a global biodiversity alliance to address conservation and preservation issues of the world's rich biodiversity.



commitment for environmental preservation of the Amazonian natural resources.

Moreover, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 by the Bangkok Declaration. Over the years, ASEAN members have taken several steps towards improving environmental programs such as the 1985 ASEAN Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; the 1994–1998 ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment and the recent 2000 ASEAN Framework Agreement on Access to Biological and Genetic Resources.

Global Alliance for Biodiversity

In view of the unique and very important experiences and challenges of these three regional initiatives (COMIFAC, ACTO and ASEAN), we strongly believe that leaders in these regions should brainstorm on how they can work together to establish a mutually supportive synergy that will eventually intensify the process of a global alliance. The main objective will be to ensure that all the key partners (governments, and civil societies including the private sector) fulfill their common interest of conserving

the world's forests and sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity at a global level.

Therefore we strongly believe that the upcoming eighth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 8) of CBD in Brazil presents us with a great opportunity, where all the three lead organizations: ACTO, COMIFAC and ASEAN should sign a co-operation agreement. The main objective will be to establish a forum for exchange of information, capacity building and of mutual cooperation to pursue environmental protection and rational use of the abundant natural resources, with a view to contributing to the attainment of sustainable development.

This global alliance will also act as a forum for sharing experiences since several hands-on projects have been launched in these regions. For instance, the Central Africa region has shown the world how forests can be instrumental in fostering regional and international cooperation with the adoption of the Convergence Plan and the creation of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership which brought together the countries of the region and other governmental and non-governmental partners. As Mr. Pekka Pato-

saari, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests, has said to illustrate some of our achievements in the field of conservation: Africa teaches this lesson of cooperation and understanding to the world. In actual fact, this partnership can also benefit from the South American experience in conservation and eco-tourism and how indigenous people are involved in the protection of biodiversity. We can also benefit and learn from the high technological expertise of wood processing and timber trade from Latin America.

We all agree that to reverse the loss of biodiversity in the world today we require innovative approaches at local and global levels, and together to devote our environmental conservation efforts for a better world for all. We need to build synergies and bridges within existing initiatives. Key institutions working on environmental issues would also be part of this alliance, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). It is our utmost hope that to be able to save our planet, we will all support this partnership, for united we stand, but divided we fall.



Honorable Dato' Seri Azmi Khalid,
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia

COP 7: **The Stepping Stone To the 2010 Biodiversity Target**

Malaysia is a country rich in natural beauty and cultural diversity. As a nation, we are also known for our traditional charm and warm hospitality.

Having said that, Malaysia was indeed proud and honored to be the host of the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 7) and the first Meeting of the Parties of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP/MOP-1).

For Malaysia, it was a gratifying and a particularly rewarding experience for us to be able to preside and witness this crucial moment in the history of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It is crucial because both the COP and COP/MOP laid the foundation for enhanced implementation of the Convention and for a pact to safeguard the future of our planet, while sharing the benefits of the planet's natural bounty with its proprietors.

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety came into effect just a few months earlier and the necessary machinery had to be in place for the Protocol to work. The smooth and efficient meeting demonstrated to the world that the Protocol is operational. The compliance committee, which was established in Kuala Lumpur, had also given its guarantee that the provisions of the Protocol will be enacted. The rapid momentum and high number of ratifications of the Protocol are also testimony of the importance of this agreement to the world community.

Major advances were also achieved in the Convention by the Parties on issues central to the implementation of all three objectives of the Convention, i.e. conservation, sustainable use and sharing of benefits.

In the area of conservation of biological diversity, the Parties had adopted the work program on protected areas. The complexity and enormity of this issue did not deter the Parties from taking on a bold agenda by discussing the expansion and funding of protected area networks around the planet. This included considerations of the role and importance of protected areas in one of the last frontiers—the high seas. Both terrestrial and marine protected areas are of central importance to the conservation of species and habitats in Malaysia.

However, we will not be able to protect biological diversity if we do not find ways toward a more sustainable consumption. The 14 practical principles of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity will influence future policies, including certification schemes, the role and responsibilities of business and a host of other activities.

COP 7 also took a first step towards elaborating on an international regime on access and benefit sharing. As the result of the agreement at COP 7, the Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) has prepared a draft text that will be discussed in Curitiba.

Another significant outcome of COP 7 was the adoption of a framework for evaluating progress towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target and for sharing biodiversity concerns with a broader public. The outcome-oriented targets provide focus on the actions necessary to reach the overall 2010 target while the indicators provide a way to measure and communicate progress. Agreement on these indicators has spurred the scientific community to action to harness their expertise in biodiversity monitoring and galvanize action to reach the targets.

Finally, COP 7 also established the Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI) with a mandate to review the effectiveness of the Convention and fine-tune its focus on implementation.

While COP 7 was important, the inter-session period has been equally important in maintaining the momentum of translating policy into action. About 50 inter-session meetings were held to follow up on the important decisions of COP 7 and prepare for COP 8. Malaysia had the privilege of presiding over several of these meetings, including the Working Groups on Implementation and on Protected Areas, as well as MOP 2. We are indeed proud of the opportunity to contribute to this important phase in the duration of the Convention.

Malaysia now looks forward to passing the gavel to Brazil. We are confident the new President will build on past successes and ensure that all efforts will be taken to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, I would like to assure all parties and stakeholders concerned that we will fulfill our part to ensure that this target is achieved





Valli Moosa, *President, The World Conservation Union—IUCN*

Losing battles but winning the war



The promise is made: by 2010, we will significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity.

It is an ambitious goal. Some even say it is unrealistic. The latest evidence seems to show that we are going full speed in the wrong direction. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Global Biodiversity Outlook rub our noses in hard statistics and feed our critics with the ammunition to question the usefulness of global environmental conventions in particular and conservation action in general. And then we are not even touching on some of the questions that live in the public mind about the future of our planet.

Are they right? Are we fighting a losing battle? Can we really reduce the loss of biodiversity or are we merely slowing down an inevitable process of extinction and degradation? In my view, these are the fundamental questions we have to answer before, in and after Curitiba. And not only to ourselves, but more importantly to the staunch defenders of “development as usual”.

Our standard response is that the conservation and sustainable use of our natural wealth is a moral obligation and a precondition to reduce poverty, make development sustainable and improve the quality of life on earth. Our standard solution is that we need to set aside certain areas, manage them effectively, and promote major changes in the

way humanity does business. This involves all of society, and entails a fundamental shift in the way we consume and produce.

In my view, behind those almost obligatory responses lie the many reasons why we, the conservation community, will see our efforts succeed in the end. In short, the reason is this: we have demonstrated cases and initiatives that work. There are examples of how we can save species, how biodiversity conservation can offer income opportunities to people, how the power of markets can be harnessed, and how partnerships can deliver truly sustainable development.

The experiences we have accumulated put forth four main challenges to the Convention:

Challenge 1: Communicating and mainstreaming the message. Over the last years, much media attention has been devoted to the physical evidence of climate change – melting ice-caps, a record number of devastating hurricanes in the Americas, floods, droughts, and other environmental disasters worldwide.

I have to ask myself, why is there not the same level of media coverage about the loss of biodiversity? Perhaps because this erosion is taking place slowly but inexorably, out of sight, and for most of us, out of mind. The destruction of a few more hectares of tropical forest, a fishing boat returning empty to port, or the quiet extinction of an island’s unique flora, are not dramatic

enough, apparently, to make prime time television news.

In a world where the marketplace plays a large part in determining the fate of biodiversity, we must become better at linking ecological knowledge to economic decisions. Our community must get better at demonstrating the relevance of biodiversity to poverty reduction, sustainable agriculture, water availability, human health. We need to show that biodiversity loss impacts on our livelihoods and our ability to manage risks, including from natural disasters. We need to prove at a larger scale how an investment in the conservation of ecosystem goods and services and how the development of economic policies that are supportive of conservation can help foster sustainable development.

Building awareness of the significance of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, mainstreaming biodiversity into development decision-making processes, and making the case for the importance of biodiversity for meeting the Millennium Development Goals, are critically important if we are to reach the 2010 target.

Challenge 2: Fostering implementation of the three objectives of the CBD in a balanced manner. After some 10 years of development of the CBD programmes of work, we need to move decisively to implementing them. And we need to do this in a balanced manner. The three objectives of the CBD are closely interrelated. Conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources must be applied in unison.

The CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas is a breakthrough that needs continued support. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals will also depend on the sustainable use of wild biological diversity alongside the management of agriculture and livestock. Genetic resources and traditional knowledge are further key elements of poverty reduction and development strategies for many countries and local communities, including indigenous peoples. The Convention is the first multilateral attempt to address the need to prevent misappropriation



- CHALLENGE 1: COMMUNICATING AND MAINSTREAMING THE MESSAGE
- CHALLENGE 2: FOSTERING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THREE OBJECTIVES OF THE CBD IN A BALANCED MANNER
- CHALLENGE 3: DEVELOPING THE MEANS TO MEASURE PROGRESS TOWARD 2010
- CHALLENGE 4: ENGAGING ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY

tion of those resources and knowledge, and the benefits derived from their use. The work of the CBD in complementing the mandate from the World Summit on Sustainable Development to develop a regime of Access and Benefit Sharing is of high importance to ensure equity and sustainability in the use of biological diversity.

But implementation is not only about willingness; it needs resources and capacities in accordance with the commitments of Rio.

Challenge 3: Developing the means to measure progress toward 2010. The development of simple yet rigorous, science-based indicators is vital for any meaningful assessment of progress towards our biodiversity target.

There have been good advances on this front, but much remains to be done. Indicators such as those based on IUCN's Red List Index, or on global coverage of protected areas, are already providing credible information on some trends. The World Conservation Union, through its Species Survival Commission, is also contributing towards identifying indicators for the sustainability of humankind's use of terrestrial and marine natural resources. There is a pressing need for a concerted effort to complete the search for robust indicators, building on the work being done by many organizations, and above all, to find the funds necessary for these indicators to be applied by Parties in assessing biodiversity trends at the national level.

Challenge 4: Engaging all sectors of society. The 2010 target will only be met if all actors, including the private sector, come together to stem the loss of biodiversity.

Engaging the whole range of actors, from global to local levels, is a key concern of several initiatives of the Union. For example, in Europe, IUCN is facilitating the 2010 Countdown initiative in which more than fifty organizations have joined forces to work towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target. For the first time, regions and companies are contributing to the achievement of an internationally agreed conservation target.

Riding the groundswell

The challenges are clear. Can we make them real? Again I refer to the progress that has been made in the application of practical conservation measures on the ground. They show that conservation action is making progress and is increasingly finding ways to engage other sectors in partnerships that integrate biodiversity conservation into private sector operations, land use planning and so on. They show that conservation, sustainable use and the equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits can help people to develop new livelihood and income-generating opportunities.

Surely, it takes more than just a few examples to meet the 2010 target. We need decisive action and political will to make the quantum leap needed to achieve this target. And we need to continue to demonstrate the benefits of conservation to people and nature, so that it will mean more than isolated islands of progress. The examples are slowly binding together into patches and landscapes where the benefits of different approaches to the management of our natural wealth become clear. What we learn will merge into a collection of successful management tools and approaches that turn into a new model of development.

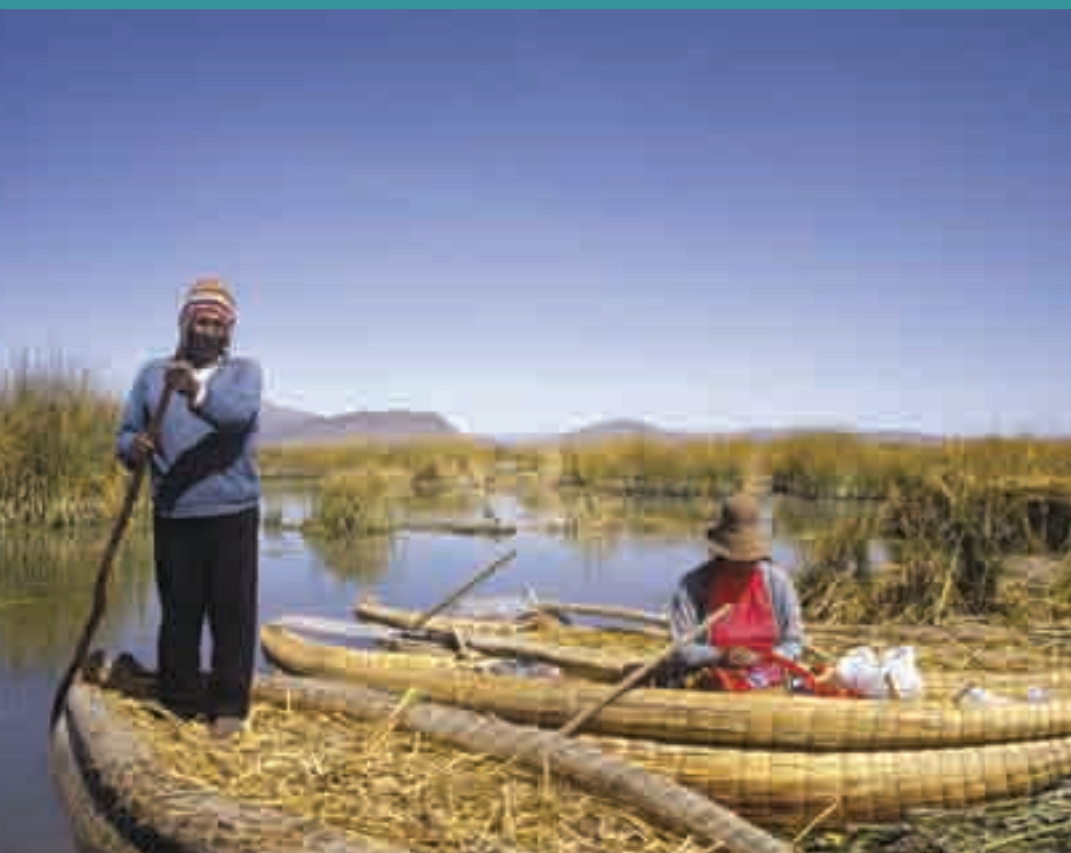
But most important, we are slowly but surely reaching the point where our efforts clearly show other sectors of society that behind our overarching message there is hard evidence to support our claims. That we can build roads without ruining an entire forest, that we can provide a better life to people without turning a wetland into an irrigation channel, that we can have economic growth without destroying the unique landscapes of our homes. The better we show that conservation is a necessary component of development, the more people will listen.

In the end, people can argue about ideas. But they cannot argue with reality.



Sigmar Gabriel, *Minister of the Environment, Federal Republic of Germany*

Sustainable use of protected areas is key to eradicating extreme poverty



WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS, SAVANNAS, WETLANDS AND COASTAL ZONES, THE RURAL POPULATION IN PARTICULAR IS BEING ROBBED OF ITS NATURAL RESOURCE BASE.

I would like to extend my best wishes to all the delegates at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the Biosafety Protocol.

Awareness of the need to conserve biological diversity has continuously increased in recent decades in particular. There has certainly been no lack of increasingly urgent calls for such conservation. Conferences of the Parties—not only to the CBD—have since adopted many good and ambitious decisions. With its 2010 target, the World Summit in Johannesburg gave us clear orientation for our endeavours. However, loss of biodiversity still continues.

For me, one thing is clearer than ever: we have to further intensify our efforts. Our decisions have to be followed by action. For this we need instruments which really do enable us to secure the world's natural heritage.

In Germany and in Europe we are making great efforts to set up the European Natura 2000 network. With this we are playing our part in implementing the programme of work on protected areas adopted at the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Kuala Lumpur.

We must move quickly to protect habitats with particularly high biodiversity from destruction worldwide. This calls for clear

international agreements and even closer cooperation. At the same time, we must remain committed in our implementation of the principle of sustainability in all areas of use.

Extreme poverty, the drastic destruction of natural life-supporting resources, but also a lack of education, are among the greatest challenges for sustainable development in the 21st century. In fact, these problems are intrinsically linked. With the destruction of forests, savannas, wetlands and coastal zones, the rural population in particular is being robbed of its natural resource base. The rapid advancement of climate change is further aggravating this situation; at the same time, the destruction of forests is accelerating climate change. The continuing loss of biodiversity not only increasingly weakens the stability of global ecosystems, it also has far-reaching consequences for poor people in particular. Biological diversity is often their most important capital. The rural population is especially dependent on a healthy environment for the supply of clean drinking water, food, medicine, energy and for the conservation of fertile soils. The destruction of natural resources and the loss of biological diversity exacerbate poverty and hunger. The fact that poverty is growing in many countries of the world and biodiversity is decreasing on a daily basis, despite all endeavours, shows that we need to launch new initiatives to support above all poor countries in conserving biological diversity and in achieving sustainable development. An improved, sustainable use of the genetic resources that are essential for feeding rural and urban populations is particularly important in this regard. The German government promotes projects geared towards this goal in many different countries.

In the framework of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, the German government supports numerous projects all over the world with a positive impact on biodiversity. A majority of the current approximately 180 bilateral biodiversity projects are related to protected areas. For 35 of these projects, the main focus is on sustainable use in protected areas and their surrounding areas, such as with the projects “Man-

agement of the Tam Dao National Park” in Vietnam, “Protection of the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve” in Honduras and in the Pendjari National Park in Benin. In addition, Germany’s development cooperation also promotes activities that facilitate implementation of the CBD decisions on “access to genetic resources and equitable benefit sharing”. These include activities in the Philippines, the Amazon basin, in Namibia and in other African countries.

The German government also attaches great importance to further advancing measures against the global destruction of forests and against illegal logging as part of various ongoing international processes. Preserving forests worldwide is not only important for conserving biological diversity, it also contributes to climate protection. I am therefore grateful that the avoidance

of emissions from deforestation was highlighted at the last Climate Change Conference in Montreal as an important issue for the future.

The CDB embodies modern nature conservation as it combines conservation principles with sustainable use. With its third goal of equitable benefit sharing it incorporates the justified calls from developing countries for a share in the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources. There is a delicate balance between these three objectives; in my view, the CBD will only be successful if all three objectives—conservation, sustainable use and an equitable share for developing countries of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources—are striven for in equal measure. The decisions on sustainable use from the last meeting of the Conference of

the Parties in Kuala Lumpur are milestones on the road towards these objectives. Setting up a global network of protected areas, significant progress in implementing the programme of work on forest biodiversity and the swift conclusion of negotiations on an international regime for “access to genetic resources and equitable benefit sharing” are the key challenges for future work.

I wish the delegates at the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Curitiba every success with their negotiations. May they bring us another step closer to nature conservation, the sustainable use of nature and equitable benefit sharing and thus closer to the goal of a sustainable world. I would like to see strengthened commitment in the implementation of the decisions so that we really can achieve the 2010 target.



The challenge for guaranteeing Biodiversity forever and for all: a way forward



Biodiversity faces many challenges but undoubtedly the international community's main concern is how to guarantee biodiversity forever and for all. From my personal experience as a concerned member of the community but also as Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, there are at least three major paths required to be followed in order to succeed.

Sustainable development, biodiversity and national development plans.

Biodiversity is probably the most valuable common good for the future of humankind. At the national level, the most relevant legal regulations are commonly included in the national constitutions which contain provisions for the achievement of national main goals and the protection and promotion of the so-called "protected juridical goods" which are supposed to address the main needs and expectations of the national society as a whole in determined historic moments: health, education, personal security, etc; and these "juridical goods" may change according to the valuation the society made on its priorities.

During the last decades of the past century the international community began to address environmental problems as a result of the outcomes deriving from scientific studies that presented concerns regarding the need to implement actions with a view to avoid the degradation of the environment and guarantee the living conditions for the current and future generations. The Rio Summit and all relevant decisions therein adopted, including the negotiation of the conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification, as well as the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 stated the political framework to develop concerted efforts in this regard. But after ten years, the Johannesburg Summit recognized that lack of implementation of the agreed objectives continued to be the main challenge for environment and sustainable development. Environmental related issues have also been identified as the "third generation of human rights" (besides individual

and social rights) by several authors and researchers.

In Costa Rica, our National Constitution states in its article 50 the right to the enjoyment of a healthy and ecologically equilibrated environment since 1995. Besides signing and ratifying the main global environmental conventions, specific regulations have been enacted to better address the achievement of the desired goals: a new forestry law (1995) a biodiversity law (1994) and the environmental law (1996).

The juridical framework created was further complemented with the development of national processes aimed at building the political and programmatic structure for governmental and civil society action towards that end and finally by 2002 the National Development Plan—that is legally defined as the main tool for orienting the governmental action towards the achievement of national development goals and targets as well as for the definition of priorities for investment of public resources—included all these instruments as the strategic framework for the fulfillment of the sustainable development goals.

Including and positioning sustainable development strategies—including the sustainable management of biodiversity—into the national planning processes and structures continues to be a challenge for many countries but it's the only way of guaranteeing long term political commitment and a normal flow of resources from the national budgets.

Generation of knowledge for protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.

When one is not aware of the values of natural resources for fulfilling different needs it is almost impossible to develop a personal and social attitude towards the protection and use of them. Biodiversity resources are still in the early stages in terms of knowledge although they have been historically used by mankind. Additional and concerted efforts have to be made at the national, regional and global levels to discover the wide range of goods and services deriving from biodiversity and at the same time decide on

the more appropriate ways of protecting and conserving such resources for the sustainable use of current and future generations.

Knowledge and the related social and individual awareness raising measures required should be built on public bases and respecting and promoting traditional uses by local communities and indigenous peoples. Much of the future of food provision and the potential to definitely solve the hunger problems currently affecting many regions and countries are to be found by using biodiversity resources in a more efficient and equitable way. A special effort has to be made to better address the high potential found in the seas worldwide.

Generating economic value for biodiversity resources.

Economic values have been a cutting edge for the progress of humanity. Most of the political efforts are driven by market generation and consolidation. Biodiversity resources have always been an important element of the worldwide trade but not necessarily generated a fair exchange relationship among producers and consumers. We all can recall the importance of basic goods (corn, meat, fish, wheat, sugar, etc.) in the recent past international trade but also that providing countries have not been able to fulfill their basic needs despite the fact most of them were producers of agro-biodiversity goods for the consumer countries.

The values embodied in biodiversity products have not been adequately internalized in the final prices and so recognized by markets, causing an imbalanced trade relationship. There are also many services provided by biodiversity: health care, spiritual relaxing, basic needs fulfillment, etc.; which are not currently recognized by the markets.

There is then a need for establishing an enabling environment that allows the internalizations of the full range of services provided by biodiversity and also the fair recognition of the full values into the prices of goods traded both at the national and international level. Equitable sharing of benefits can only be obtained if market conditions are so oriented, and international solidarity

should also be reflected in the creation of the appropriate institutional and regulatory scheme to this end.

National and international economies and policies should include in the accounting systems those values and consequently be able to devote more investment and mobilization of financial resources in general to the management and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, recognizing the rising importance of this issue as the emerging “protected juridical good” that is of strategic importance for the future of humankind.

Biodiversity conservation as an environmental service: a success story in Costa Rica.

When the country decided to develop a strategy to protect 6% of the species that co-exist in the planet, a twofold approach was devised: The creation of the National System for Conservation Areas (SINAC, acronym in Spanish) that currently protects a little more than 26% of the national territory and the Environmental Services Payment Program, implemented by the National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) that protects the biodiversity in non-public properties.

The Environmental Services Payment Program.

The Environmental Services Payment Program results from an evolving, learning and reflective process to finally become a successful sustainable development policy tool with high potential to be used in other regions of the world. It consists of a financial recognition to the owners of forests and forest plantations for the environmental services they provide and which directly benefit the protection and improvement of the environment one of them being the “Protection of biodiversity for its conservation and sustainable use” according to the Forestry Law.

Payments to landowners are made on the basis of different modalities of conservation: forest protection, reforestation, forest management and Agro-forestry Systems (SAF, acronym in Spanish), not calculated in hectares but rather in standing trees. To date, the resources available for investment have not been sufficient to meet the growing demand for PES. During 1997–2004 more than US\$ 110 million have been invested to protect around 450,000 hectares of forest and forest plantations, which have indirectly benefited 7,000 people; however, there is an extra offer of nearly 800,000 hectares. The investments are made based on a land planning proposal strategy and on criteria



founded in the best technical-scientific information available to determine which areas are the most important for the conservation of biodiversity.

In general terms, the Payment for Environmental Services Program, jointly with other governmental actions, have made it possible to reach objectives which have had very positive impacts:

- Reduce the rate of deforestation
- Recover forest cover and degraded lands
- Efficient mechanisms against illegal logging
- Promote non-traditional production and exports and use of potential markets
- Promote the forestry industry
- Contribute to rural development
- Contribute to national strategies against poverty
- Contribute to the fulfillment of global environmental goals
- Develop joint agendas between the agricultural and forestry sector without competing for the use of the soil

There are many theories and opinions about these actions, both positive and negative. In Costa Rica, the mechanism that ex-

ists is probably unique in the world with a national dimension, and has created a very important capacity for the country's environmental management.

The Payment for Environmental Services Program has become one of the most successful policies promoted by the country in order to fulfill the sustainable development objectives. Not only has it been successful in recovering forest cover and protecting biodiversity resources, but it has had important social and economic impacts. More importantly, the program has become a state policy, with political support which has made it possible to overcome changes in the government, have solid social support and quality guarantee; however, the main concern is the long-term financial sustainability since the existing resources are not fully generated by the market and the sources deriving from public budgets must compete with other sectors which may be considered of higher priority.

The good news then is that despite the challenges we are all facing, some successful stories can also be found worldwide and by exchanging these experiences we can continue building.



Financing Biodiversity Conservation: The Role of the Global Environment Facility

The loss of biodiversity and with it, the systems that support life on the planet, represents one of the most important challenges of the modern world. Despite the substantial progress achieved in raising awareness and establishing the foundations for moving towards more sustainable economies and ecosystems, negative trends continue to be alarming: the recently released Millennium Ecosystem Assessment revealed that 60 percent of the ecosystem services that they evaluated (15 out of 24) continue to be degraded at ever increasing rates. These losses further accelerate species extinction, reduce current and future services to societies and economies, and disproportionately affect poor people.

The loss of biodiversity must be viewed within a long-term perspective and one in which the ultimate goal, the reversal in the rates of biodiversity loss, will require significant changes in the way our economic processes internalize biodiversity. Such transformation must simultaneously address the widespread poverty, conflict, and disease still affecting billions of people on the planet. To succeed, this long-term process requires building the capacity of societies to solve their pressing development challenges while conserving biodiversity, using it sustainably, and sharing the multiple benefits provided by genetic resources.

It is in this long-term context that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) operates as the financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with a mandate to assist developing country parties to meet the objectives of the Convention. Since its inception in 1991, the GEF has financed more than 500 projects in biodiversity, with a combined value of US\$6.5 billion, including US\$2.1 billion contributed by the GEF as the financing mechanism of the CBD, and an additional US\$4.4 billion in cofinancing. These projects have supported the principal programs of work of the CBD, and have been based, primarily, on the ecosystem approach and capacity building. These figures include the support for 290 enabling activities with a combined value of US\$92.4 million to assist developing country Parties to implement their obligations under the CBD.

The results behind these impressive figures are a tribute to the efforts and commitment of Parties to the CBD. The GEF has helped establish or strengthen close to 1,500 protected areas, covering a total of 300 million hectares, and representing, by area, close to 25 percent of the worldwide system of protected areas. Complementing this work, the GEF has enhanced its support for the mainstreaming of biodiversity in productive landscapes, and in the last four years alone, has covered an additional set of over 36 million hectares in such sectors



as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, coastal zone management, and tourism. The GEF has also played a major role in establishing the foundations of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety through support for national frameworks in 126 countries. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and the Small Grants Programme of the GEF complement these projects by providing tens of thousands of smaller grants that support local communities and small nongovernmental organizations. These accomplishments represent important building blocks towards achieving the 2010 targets adopted by the Conference of the Parties, as well as the Millennium Development Goals, and demonstrate the effective partnership between the CBD and the GEF.

Looking into the future, there are two important issues that will shape the con-

tinued effectiveness of the GEF as the financial mechanism of the CBD. First, the GEF Council recently adopted a framework to allocate resources to countries based on each country's potential to generate global environmental benefits and its capacity, policies and practices to successfully implement GEF projects. As such, the framework builds on GEF's existing country-driven approach and partnerships with Implementing and Executing Agencies, and provides countries with increased predictability in the allocation of GEF funds. This Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) will allow the GEF to target resources in a way that is more transparent and, hopefully, more effective and more efficient. In addition, by increasing the predictability of potential financing at the country level, the system enhances the capacity of countries to ensure that GEF funds are targeted in accordance with their most pressing priorities, thus placing countries "in the driver's seat." We recognize, however, that the transition to the RAF will present challenges. Thus, we are ready and willing to strengthen our dialogue with countries to support their adaptation to the new system.

The second issue is the need to achieve a robust fourth Replenishment of the GEF. The implementation of the CBD is gathering momentum and with it, demands and absorptive capacity at the country level continue to grow. Simultaneously, the addition of new focal areas to the GEF places greater pressure on scarce GEF resources. The demonstrated and strong track record of the GEF as the financing mechanism for most of the global environmental architecture is a strong argument in favor of vigorous political support from the international community for the rapid conclusion of a successful and generous replenishment.

In closing, I wish to personally congratulate Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif for his recent appointment as Executive Secretary of the Convention. Mr. Djoghlaif has played a major role in the GEF as Executive Coordinator of UNEP's GEF Program, leaving behind a strong legacy of an exciting GEF portfolio in all focal areas. We look forward to continuing our strong collaboration with the Convention Secretariat under his leadership.

Efforts undertaken by the government of The Gambia to protect Biodiversity

With mainly an agrarian economy where 75% of the population is made of farmers who derive their livelihoods from the land and forests, The Gambia cannot afford to neglect its biodiversity any longer. Although The Gambia is a very small country, it has a wealth of biological diversity. It has different types of ecosystems including close woodland, open woodland, tree and shrub savanna, wetland ecosystems, marine and coastal ecosystems and agricultural (cropland and rangeland) ecosystems. Apart from serving as the main food source for the local population, the importance of biodiversity in the cultural evolution of Gambian society in the form of providing cures for certain illnesses and diseases through the use of locally available natural resources has meant that our people need to preserve this national heritage.

However, forests in the country have come under intense pressure as a result of unchecked population growth, land use conversion, and a heavy dependence on firewood, timber, and forests products. Furthermore, forest fires are a major concern as they have resulted in habitat destruction and degradation threatening wildlife habitats. Consequently, our country is losing its original wetlands, putting many species under severe threat.

There are no up-to-date figures to illustrate the abundance and changes in the abundance of the species, but it is believed that there has been a marked decrease in species abundance. Available data shows that there are 117 species of mammals, over 600 species of birds representing 75 families, 47 species of reptiles and 30 species of amphibians. The most important economic tree species include 19 timber species, 9 firewood species and 10 tree species of minor forest products. It is known that 13 species of large mammals have become extinct locally since the last century and a similar number is seriously threatened. For example, it has been reported that the Giant Eland was last seen in 1903 and the last elephant was killed in 1913.

National Strategies

In response to Article 8 of the CBD and in an attempt to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity

Target of significantly reducing the current loss of biodiversity, The Gambian government's response strategies to these threats have been varied. They include the adoption of a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the enactment of national legislation to protect certain nationally, as well internationally threatened species, introducing changes in land-use policies, creation of protected areas, and encouragement of cooperative efforts in conservation with all relevant stakeholders. These paved the way for the in-situ conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in both state-protected areas and in community forests, the latter being managed wholly by adjacent local communities.

Successes of the Scheme

Currently, a total of 12,000 ha of forestland (involving about 300 villages) are under community management. The country now has several protected areas, which promote in-situ conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity covering about 4.09% of the total land area, and sixty-six forest parks of different categories with a total land area of 32,000 ha.

In collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)—West Africa, the government is implementing an integrated coastal area and biodiversity management project aimed at strengthening coastal and marine protected area systems and in-situ conservation of globally significant species and habitats. This project is expected to significantly contribute towards raising the national protected area coverage from its current level of 4.09% to 5% of the total land area as envisaged in our NBSAP document.

A Biodiversity Fund has been established wherein revenue generated from biodiversity and related activities will be lodged to finance follow-up activities under the CBD at the national level.

On going Processes and Linkages

1. With GEF/UNEP support, we finalized and submitted our second National Report to the CBD, and plans are well underway to validate the third National

Report at a national stakeholder forum for eventual submission to UNEP and CBD Secretariat.

2. A National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) Project for The Gambia has just been completed, identifying the country's capacity needs in the areas of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, as well as in the other three Rio Conventions and related Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs).
3. As one of the six Pilot African countries, The Gambia is preparing for the implementation of the Bali Strategy Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building adopted by the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in 2004. Through this process we expect to strengthen our national capacity by way of skills development as well the use of appropriate technologies to address national environmental concerns.
4. Through UNEP/GEF assistance and funding, we are in the process of elaborating our first National Biosafety framework to control the movement and use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and other products of biotechnology in order to safeguard the environment and protect human life as well.

Way forward

In spite of the successes recorded through the foregoing activities, more still needs to be done as biodiversity continue to face threats in my country. It is time that the international community, particularly the CBD and related MEAs re-direct and shift their focus to the implementation of relevant national action plans at field level. For example, since the adoption of the NBSAP in 1999 and National Action Plan to combat desertification in The Gambia in 2000, very little has been registered in the form of achievement in their implementation nationally for lack of funds. It is at the level of the field that the CBD and other MEAs could be meaningful to make a visible positive impact on the lives of the rural poor, and thereby contribute positively towards their socio-economic upliftment.

Challenges Ahead for the CBD

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has been both praised and 'cursed'

It was praised because developing countries and some developed countries found it to be a very comprehensive treaty which provides a lot of scope to safeguard our natural capital and ensure its wise usage. The CBD was also 'cursed' by some developed countries because they perceived elements in it which seemed to threaten their interests. This, of course, is very far from the truth.

The negotiators from the North and South—and I was one of them—fought bitter and sometimes abusive battles for two years to complete the CBD for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. In spite of the tensions and abrasions, the negotiating process produced no permanent enemies, but permanent friends, and the permanent reminder that only a joint North-South endeavour can ensure the healthy survival of our Planet Earth.

It would seem that we have traversed one full round and fourteen years later we find ourselves back in Brazil—this time for COP 8. This augurs well for us to make this COP a memorable one. Let it not be "business as usual"! We have a unique opportunity with the new and dynamic leadership of the CBD to make a difference at COP8 and re-capture the constructive fighting spirit of the negotiators of the CBD!

Before we move forward, it is essential to take stock and consider what we have achieved thus far. In numerical terms, since COP 1 in the Bahamas until COP 7 in Malaysia, we have produced 559 documents not counting the 42 for COP 8, and we have made 179 decisions. It is a commendable effort by any standards, although I regret the toll it took on our forests! These documents and decisions have served us well in enhancing our knowledge of the issues and the differences and nuances in our national positions.

Besides the documents and the decisions in their varying degrees of implementation, we must be proud of one tangible result in the shape of the Biosafety Protocol, which held its first Meeting of the Par-

ties (MOP1) in 2004 in Malaysia. Although much work remains to be done and much resistance to be overcome, the very existence of the Protocol is significant. It serves to remind us that Biotechnology offers new and exciting advances, but in the pursuit of its development, there must also be regulations to safeguard the health of the environment and the health of human beings. There has to be a change to the mindset that Biotechnology poses zero risk.

In fact, mindsets hold the key to the fate of the CBD. Certain mindsets have to change because they are obstacles to the achievement of the Convention's objectives. We only need to look at the three objectives of the CBD to notice the absence of any concrete result.

The objective of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) has been particularly plagued by certain mindsets, which find 'biopiracy' acceptable and consider it ethical not to share benefits with the providers of the genetic resources. The CBD is clear on this. It is a challenge to all of us as we move ahead that we resist any attempts to 'amend' the Convention during the implementation process. It would be desirable to recognize the fact that a successful achievement of the ABS objective would go a long way to ensure the realization of the other two objectives. The challenge would be to expeditiously conclude an international regime on ABS as called for in Johannesburg, thus providing a spontaneous incentive for the conservation and sustainable use of our biological resources.

Another important challenge for the CBD is the achievement of the 2010 target to reduce biodiversity loss. We are only four years away from the date and much has to be done in the short time left. I believe the fast-track approach would be to engage our local scientists right away in relevant projects. Action on the ground is of the essence.

We are all well briefed on the reasons for biodiversity loss, and we are all familiar with the activities at the national and international level that contribute to the imprudent exploitation of biological resources. In short, we have sufficient information from

all sources to proceed with some remedial action where feasible. Yet, there is a mindset which is convinced that the setting up of a scientific panel would provide the impetus to arrest biodiversity loss. I believe the establishment of such a panel at this juncture would only serve to delay the process and divert valuable time and effort, not to mention financial resources, away from the urgent tasks at hand. In any case, the findings of such a panel would have to be assessed. I suggest the involvement of local experts because they are familiar with the 'terrain'. If we are genuinely interested in achieving the 2010 target, it would be wise to find our answers at the national level.

In the big picture, it is evident that the U.N. family of nations has shown its confidence in the CBD and recognized its potential by becoming Parties to the Convention. The CBD enjoys the widest support with 188 Parties. Even non-Parties take an interest in the development of the Convention and are actively engaged in following its activities. Civil society has also played a very supportive role. The challenge for the future is to harness this support so that it finds expression in a better knowledge of the threats facing biodiversity, and in the contribution the man-in-the-street can make to complement the efforts of official representatives.

The CBD indeed provides a comprehensive framework for action to enable us to better manage our natural resources. It is an opportunity and a privilege to participate in efforts to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the wealth of Nature.

Finally, it is not an exaggeration to say that the fate of the CBD and indeed, the biological integrity of our planet home are in our hands as we gather in Brazil for COP 8. Can we make this a landmark COP? The alternative is to go through the motions of another COP where we continue to shuffle papers, debate decisions and obtain verbal satisfaction while more biodiversity is lost by the day. Opting for the alternative reminds me of the insouciance displayed by the Roman Emperor Nero, who continued to play his fiddle while Rome burned!!



Ahmed Djoghlaif, *Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity*

Message to the Citizens of the World

In the struggle to deliver a healthier, more just and environmentally-sound world, one issue is clear. The Earth's life support systems, from its forests and flowers to its coral reefs and waterways, are under assault as never before.

Four years ago, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the leaders of the world agreed to achieve by 2010 "a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth".

In September 2005, 150 Heads of State, meeting at the World Summit in New York called on all states to fulfil their commitment and significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Meanwhile, the findings of a landmark 2005 study into the health of the planet's ecosystems, called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, undertaken by over 1,300 experts from 95 countries, has added its voice to those of the politicians. Two thirds of the services provided by nature to humankind are in decline worldwide. Humans have made

unprecedented changes to ecosystems in recent decades to meet growing demands for food and other ecosystem services.

These changes have weakened nature's ability to deliver its vital services. Human activity is putting such strain on the natural functions of Earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted.

This landmark study concludes that to attain the 2010 Biodiversity Target will require not only fine words, but an unprecedented effort by all sectors of society.

The Convention on Biological Diversity is about life on earth. The achievement of the 2010 Biodiversity Target is of a crucial importance for everyone alive today and for our children and grandchildren and generations to be born.

I would like to call on everyone to join this unprecedented effort to conserve life on Earth and to realize the 2010 target.

What is needed is a Global Alliance that brings governments, business, industry, non governmental organizations, and the men, women, and youth of this world together in a common endeavor.

The next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, (the governments) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, will be held in Curitiba, Brazil on 20-31 March 2006. It is a unique opportunity to forge such a global alliance for the achievement of the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

So I call on all citizens of our Planet Earth to join us in making a Global Alliance a reality, to bring their unique skills and contributions to bear, so that the meeting in Curitiba will be remembered as the birthplace of our renewed commitment to urgently sustain and restore Earth's life support systems.

Montreal, 3 January 2006

