



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY
PROTECT BIODIVERSITY IN DRYLANDS

22 May
2006



ACHIEVING THE 2010 TARGET!

Statement by

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Executive Secretary

Convention on Biological Diversity

On the occasion of

The High level Segment of the 14th Session of the
Commission on Sustainable Development



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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Major scientific findings have proved ample evidence that biophysical consequences of climate change are not a fiction but a reality. Atmospheric and oceanic temperatures are increasing, and associated natural disturbances such as hurricanes are becoming more intense, due in part to these changes. Hydrological cycles are also being altered: droughts and floods are returning more frequently, while mountain snowmelt is becoming part of our daily reality. These changes have far reaching implications on the biodiversity of our planet as well as on global food supply. The permafrost is melting in the boreal zone and in doing so, native ecosystems are being reduced in extent; plant and animal species in many regions across the globe are either moving to cooler environments or are in the process of disappearing; and global warming is driving disease outbreaks that are causing, for example, widespread amphibian extinctions. Climate change has been therefore identified as one of the main driver to biodiversity loss.

Mr. Chairman,

The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity through its scientific body has decided to consider in details the implication of climate change on the biodiversity of our planet. Indeed two technical expert groups on climate change and biodiversity including adaptation were convened with the support of Finland and their results submitted to the scientific body of the Convention. The experts stressed the potential of, and the need for, synergy in the implementation of activities that interlink biodiversity conservation, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and land degradation and desertification in the context of the objectives of the three Rio Conventions and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements. They also recommended that biodiversity should be part of national policies, programmes and plans for adaptation to climate change to allow ecosystems to continue providing goods and services. The recommendations of the expert groups were emphasized by the finding of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment which provided ample evidence that approaches for combating desertification, conserving biodiversity, and mitigating climate change are interlinked. Addressing these challenges is essential if the Millennium Development Goals for poverty alleviation, food production and sustainable development are to be met.

It is for these reasons for the first time in the history of the two sister Conventions, a joint meeting of their scientific subsidiary bodies was held in December last year in Montreal at the margins of the 11th COP meeting of the UNFCCC and the 11th meeting of the scientific body of the Convention. It is also for the same reasons that the Eight Conference of the Parties, held in Curitiba, Brazil in March this year and attended by 4000 participants including 122 ministers and other heads of delegations adopted a major decision on biodiversity and climate change mandating its scientific body to prepare draft guidance on how to integrate relevant climate change impact and response activities into the programme of work the convention. We in the Secretariat of the Convention looks forward to working with our sister agencies including the Commission on Sustainable development in the years to come to join forces for addressing the multifaceted implications of the climate change including its biodiversity related impacts. Lastly Mr Chair, I am pleased to inform that at the occasion of the celebration of the international biodiversity day on 22 May, the Secretariat of the Convention will with the participation of the Canadian and the Netherlands authorities, honor the memory of the late Executive Secretary of UNFCCC Ms Joke Waller-Hunter in naming the CBD conference room in Montreal on her behalf as a token tribute to her outstanding contribution in advancing the sustainable development agenda.

I thank you for your kind attention.