

**MESSAGE FROM AHMED DJOGHLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, 9 AUGUST 2010**

Constituting a relatively small portion of the world's 6.3 billion people, indigenous and local communities represent the largest portion of linguistic and cultural diversity on Earth and their traditional lands and waters overwhelmingly contain the greatest remaining reserves of biodiversity. The traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities can play an important role in addressing some of the grave issues currently facing humanity, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, although its potential has yet to be fully explored.

This year's celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People is of special significance. It coincides with the celebration of the International Year on Biodiversity as well as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. It is taking place while the biodiversity family is actively finalizing an international protocol on access and benefit-sharing, which will make a significant contribution in promoting the very objective of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People.

In negotiating the draft Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, the Parties have recognized the inter-linkages between traditional knowledge and genetic diversity, to ensure that indigenous and local communities will ultimately benefit when their knowledge is accessed and used with their approval. Thus, traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources constitute an important component of the international regime, which promises to establish a much needed balance in the interest of all concerned, notably indigenous and local communities.

This also coincides with the preparations, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, of a high-level meeting of the General Assembly exclusively devoted to biodiversity with the participation of Heads of State and Government. The 192 leaders of the world will provide leadership and guidance in shaping the post-2010 biodiversity strategy. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in October 2010 in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, is expected to adopt a new Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020 with the full engagement of all stakeholders and, in particular, indigenous and local communities.

The interrelated nature of biological diversity, traditional knowledge, and culture necessitates a comprehensive approach to the conservation of biological diversity. The loss of linguistic and cultural diversity has been directly linked to the loss of biological diversity. To this end, the Aichi-Nagoya Biodiversity Summit will have before it the outcome of the International Conference on Biological and Cultural Diversity, which was convened in Montreal in June this year in partnership with UNESCO and the International Economic Forum of

Montreal. The aim of the Conference was to contribute to transforming political commitments into concrete actions by developing recommendations towards effectively integrating biological and cultural diversity into development cooperation strategies and programmes. With the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity acting as global focal point for biodiversity and UNESCO acting as global focal point for cultural diversity, together we strengthen the linkages between biological and cultural diversity initiatives at international level, and support development between interlinked provisions of conventions and programmes dealing with biological and cultural diversity at relevant scales.

It is with deep respect that I extend my hand to the world's indigenous and local communities as our partners in saving our Earth in all her beauty and diversity both for now and for future generations. I look forward, therefore, to continuing our work together, and on behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, I wish all indigenous people of the world a memorable celebration of this International Day of the World's Indigenous People and take this opportunity to encourage you to continue participating in the International Year of Biodiversity, as well as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.
