



## Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



### International Workshop 'Forests in a Changing Environment' Koli National Park, Finland, 3-5 September 2008

#### Statement on behalf of Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to applaud the Finnish government for hosting this timely and important event.

The non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work, and the Global Objectives on Forests, offer unique opportunities to strengthen the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity, and they are an excellent platform for increased collaboration between the UNFF and the UNCBD.

In this regard, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCBD in May 2008 in Bonn, Germany, requested the Executive Secretary to explore, together with the Director of the UNFF Secretariat, possibilities for a joint work plan between the two Secretariats. I believe that such a plan with targeted joint activities would greatly benefit both processes.

I am very pleased to announce that a programme of staff exchanges between the Secretariats of the Convention and UNFF has been initiated recently in order to enhance the collaboration between our two sister organisations. We are also collaborating closely in developing the report on forest biodiversity and protected areas for the eighth session of the UNFF, in order to ensure that the Forum is provided with the most up-to-date information on these issues.

Your discussions in the course of the coming days will result in important contributions to the eighth session of the Forum. I would hope that one of your recommendations would be directed towards harnessing the present opportunities for stronger collaboration between our processes, notably through a joint workplan between the Secretariats. The potential benefits of such collaboration are numerous. To name but one example: 2010 will be the International Year of Biodiversity, and 2011 the International Year of Forests. Both the UNCBD and the UNFF, through their Secretariats, could use this opportunity to highlight the important role of forests for the world's biodiversity, and the importance of further progress towards sustainable forest management, throughout both years.



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Ladies and gentlemen,

Healthy and intact forest ecosystems are a key infrastructure and our natural insurance policy in the rapidly changing environment of the 21st century. Biodiversity - the variability of life at the species, genetic, and ecosystems level - underpins the productivity and health of our forests. As such, maintaining high levels of biodiversity has been recognized as an essential aim of sustainable forest management. Recent developments, be it rising food prices, or the increasing production of biomass for bioenergy, should not lead to undue and unsustainable pressure on our forest resources, and they do not need to lead to further deforestation and forest degradation.

Instead, these developments should lead us to work harder towards sustainable management and conservation of forest resources, with the aim to fulfill economic, social and environmental objectives alike. I hope that UNFF at its eighth session can address these and other pertinent challenges, and I trust that your workshop will provide relevant contributions to this discussion.

In this spirit, I wish the meeting every success, and look forward to hearing about its results.

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