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SPECIAL EDITION



THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

FROM CONCEPTION TO IMPLEMENTATION



Historical perspectives on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity



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UNEP



Message from Hamdallah Zedan

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This is a time of great promise and great challenge for the Convention on Biological Diversity. The 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention is a time to commemorate its achievements, to assess its progress, and spur on efforts to achieve the target of achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

During the negotiations for the Convention, many argued that economic and social development and poverty eradication were the overriding priority and that environmental protection was a secondary issue. Gradually and significantly, over the last ten years, we have seen a major shift in thinking: measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity are now seen a prerequisite for—and not as an alternative to—economic and social development efforts. Nowhere was this change in outlook more marked than in the

recognition by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 of the contribution of the work done within the framework of the Convention to promote sustainable development, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty eradication and the livelihoods and cultural integrity of people.

Given this transformation of global thinking, it is encouraging to see the Convention's principles taking shape through comprehensive and internationally agreed programmes of work covering all major biomes and guided by a specific target that provides a clear road map for the work ahead.

The entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on 11 September 2003 was also an important milestone in the implementation for the Convention. The impact of modern biotechnology on biological diversity has been an issue under the Convention from the early stage in the negotiations and the entry into force of the Protocol is an example of how the Convention

process is capable of producing successful tools for the implementation of its objectives. As Parties embark on the process of negotiating an international regime for access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from their use, the lessons learned from the experience of the Cartagena Protocol will prove extremely valuable.

I want to congratulate all the States that have ratified and committed themselves to implementing both the Convention and the Protocol, and I wish to urge those that have not yet done so to follow suit as soon as possible. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all the authors who have contributed to this special edition of the *CBD News*. Their very personal views, perspectives and reminiscences of the process through which the Convention has developed are an invaluable contribution to the history of the Convention, a tribute to all our past efforts, and a beacon to guide us in the work ahead. ♣

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1.	Messages of Congratulations	1
CHAPTER 2.	1987-92: The Foundations of the Convention on Biological Diversity	4
	1992: The Earth Summit at Rio—United Nations Conference on Environment and Development	6
CHAPTER 3.	1993: From the ICCBD to Entry into Force	8
CHAPTER 4.	1994: The First meeting of the Conference of the Parties	10
CHAPTER 5.	1995: Jakarta Mandate and the first meeting of SBSITA	12
CHAPTER 6.	1996: Beginning the Negotiations on Biosafety	14
CHAPTER 7.	1997: Advances towards an Agreement on Biosafety—conversations on traditional knowledge.....	16
CHAPTER 8.	1998: A Programme for Change.....	18
CHAPTER 9.	1999: CBD on the eve of the Millennium—Bringing Biosafety to a close, beginning the negotiations on ABS	20
CHAPTER 10.	2000: From Policy to Implementation, the CBD Comes of Age in a New Millennium	22
CHAPTER 11.	2001: CBD in the new Millennium	26
CHAPTER 12.	2002: Action for a Sustainable Future—COP-6, the WSSD and the Millennium Development Goals	28
CHAPTER 13.	2003: Advancing on Sustainable Use, Traditional Knowledge and Access and Benefit Sharing	32
CHAPTER 14.	2004: The 2010 Biodiversity Target and the Entry into Force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.....	36
CHART	CBD The First Years (fold out).....	39