

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

22 May 2007
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

Ref: SCBD/OES/AD/57338

5 March 2007

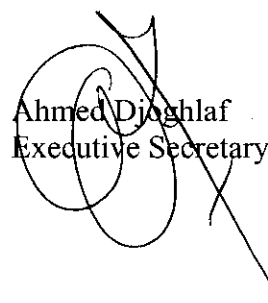
Dear Prof. Bisby,

I wish to refer to my previous message dated 12 February 2007, in which I conveyed my inability to personally attend and deliver a presentation at the One Million Species Catalogue of Life symposium and launch, scheduled to be held on 29 March 2007, at the University of Reading, United Kingdom.

On behalf of the Secretariat, I wish to congratulate the Species 2000 and its other partners for this achievement. I would therefore be extremely grateful if the attached message expressing the full support of the Convention to this initiative could be distributed or delivered at the opening of the symposium.

Once again, I wish you success in the symposium and I look forward to receiving the proceedings of the event when it becomes available.

Yours sincerely,


Ahmed Djoghlaoui
Executive Secretary

Professor Frank Bisby
Executive Director
Species 2000 Secretariat
University of Reading
Reading, United Kingdom
Fax: +44(0) 118 3788160
Email: f.a.bisby@sp2000.org

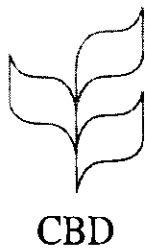


United Nations
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 1N9

Tel: +1.514.288.2220
Fax: +1.514.288.6588

www.biodiv.org
secretariat@biodiv.org



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

22 May 2007
International Day for Biological Diversity



Biodiversity and Climate Change

MESSAGE OF DR AHMED DJOHLAF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, TO THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE MILLION SPECIES CATALOGUE OF LIFE, 29 MARCH 2007

At a time of rapid loss of biodiversity on our planet, the Catalogue of Life is of special significance. It is indeed a major contribution in advancing our knowledge on species and conserving life on earth. Your symposium marks the achievement of one million species included in the Catalogue of Life. This is an important milestone that deserves to be celebrated as it brings you—and the entire scientific community—to the half-way mark of the goal of a comprehensive catalogue of all known species on Earth.

Through the Convention on Biological Diversity, countries seek to conserve and promote the sustainable use of ecosystems, species and genetic resources and to find ways to share the benefits from the use of genetic material in a fair and equitable manner. Taxonomy is recognized as a basis for conservation planning and action, and for the sustainable management of biological resources. Despite this realization, knowledge about our living environment is growing very slowly. Three hundred years after the birth of Carl von Linné, father of modern taxonomy, science has described only one out of every 10 to 12 species presumed to exist on Earth.

The Global Taxonomy Initiative, for which Parties of the Convention agreed to a comprehensive programme of work in 2002, seeks to address the obstacles hindering faster progress in filling our knowledge gaps in taxonomy. The Catalogue of Life is a major contribution to this endeavour. By providing a standard for species-based information, it facilitates the sharing of information across databases. The main objective of the Memorandum of Cooperation between Species 2000, the Integrated Taxonomic Information System and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is the development of a coordinated global taxonomy information system. More broadly, the integration of different information sources and the possibility to search across data sets will allow us to manage biodiversity information in a coherent way, and this will certainly promote not only evidence-based decision-making but also scientific, including taxonomic, progress.

This Memorandum of Cooperation comes at a time of enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention in order to achieve the target adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development of reducing substantially the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment concluded that this target is achievable but would require unprecedented efforts. The Catalogue of Life is a demonstration of an unprecedented effort to achieve such a strategic target. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is proud to be a partner of the Catalogue of Life. I wish you every success in your endeavours.

