

Dear Hama Arba Diallo,

On behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on the occasion of The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought in this 10th anniversary year of the Convention, and to salute the many achievements of the UNCCD in the brief decade since Rio.

The intimate links between biodiversity and desertification cannot be overemphasized. It is with great satisfaction and optimism that we can point to the increased synergies between the biodiversity-related Conventions. Together, through instruments such as the Joint Work Programme for 2001-2005, we will continue to build on the natural complementarity and mutually reinforcing nature of the work of our two conventions.

As is illustrated by the Theme chosen for this year's World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, 'Social Dimensions of Desertification: Migration and Poverty', there is a strong correlation between living in drylands and living in poverty. The difficult environmental conditions, including frequent droughts, the severe risk of degradation of land, water and living resources, and desertification, make dry and sub-humid lands some of the most difficult ecosystems to inhabit. Moreover, the loss of biodiversity poses one of the largest threats to dry and sub-humid lands- and to the people living in them.

Undeniably, the attainment of the goals and missions of the two conventions is critical for the health of the planet and therefore, on behalf of the CBD, I pledge renewed efforts to reinforce the positive synergies that together we can bring to bear on meeting our shared goal of achieving by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss and thus, a significant alleviation of world poverty.



Hamdallah Zedan

Executive Secretary CBD