



United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

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12 August 2013

NOTIFICATION

Bridging Agriculture and Conservation Initiative

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am pleased to draw your attention to the *Bridging Agriculture and Conservation Initiative* and invite you to engage in and support its implementation.

Food and nutrition security is obviously of paramount importance to us all and agriculture is the dominant use of land and water. The on-going discussion of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals has revitalised long-standing debate about the most appropriate agriculture development model and the potential conflicts, or synergies, with the conservation agenda. This topic is central to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011 – 2020) and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The *Bridging Agriculture and Conservation Initiative* highlights that sustainable intensification of food production can be achieved by respecting the ability of landscapes to regenerate and provide multiple goods and services, including those required to support agriculture, and thereby simultaneously reduce the ecological footprint of agriculture. This new paradigm arises from the convergence of interests of agriculture and conservation communities through working together at the landscape level, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of unilateral, sector, approaches based on an over-emphasis on “productivity” alone to achieve food security or an over-reliance on protected areas as the only means to conserve biodiversity. The initiative commits to build, and leverage existing, science, including sound economics, to underpin critical progress and to raise awareness among decision makers, including farmers, conservationists, policy makers, the private sector and funders of agriculture and conservation.

I would like to thank Bioersivity International, supported by the Christensen Fund and the Fundação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável, for bringing together more than 16 global leaders, spanning agriculture, conservation, private sector and public interests, at a meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 12 July 2013, to commit to finding, communicating and advocating for new solutions. The outcome declaration of this meeting is attached for your reference.

Bioersivity International is kindly leading this initiative and further details are available at the CBD *Biodiversity Champions* website at: <http://www.cbd.int/champions/list/>.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias
Executive Secretary

Attachment

To: CBD and SBSTTA Focal Points and relevant organisations



Convention on
Biological Diversity

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Declaration: Bridging Agriculture and Conservation

12 July 2013, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Dated 1 August 2013

One year ago at Rio+20, heads of states and governments reaffirmed the importance of sustainable agriculture in the outcome document “The Future We Want.” They committed to taking concrete actions to eradicate poverty, change patterns of consumption and production, and protect and manage the natural resource base of economic and social development. Since Rio+20, the global community has been engaged in discussion of new Sustainable Development Goals to deliver on this vision. Yet, these discussions have hardly touched on the important role that agriculture and biodiversity use and conservation can and must play in the achievement of these goals.

To fill this gap, a group of global agricultural and conservation leaders came together in Rio in July 2013 to take concrete action to launch a new initiative, **Bridging Agriculture and Conservation**, declaring:

- We agree that how we will feed our growing population in the future is one of the great, unanswered questions of our time;
- We agree that the current dominant paradigm of agricultural development which focuses primarily on increased productivity is insufficient to address society’s current and future needs for more sustainable, socially-equitable, resilient, nutritious and adaptable, as well as productive, food and farming systems;
- We agree that focusing biodiversity conservation efforts primarily in designated protected areas leaves out important parts of biodiversity and should be expanded to include conservation in agricultural landscapes as well as in the fisheries and forestry sectors;
- We recognize that food security and agriculture depends on agricultural and wild biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- We agree it is not possible, desirable nor sustainable to seek to intensify production systems without respecting the ability of the landscape to regenerate and provide multiple goods and services and the need to reduce the ecological footprint of agriculture;
- We agree that agricultural landscapes serve many functions and that there are agricultural practices and policies that can achieve multiple goals, including biodiversity conservation, through an integrated landscapes approach;
- We recognize farmers and their communities as the managers of landscapes and the natural resources within agricultural landscapes and that they must be supported by appropriate public policies and incentives to implement sustainable agriculture practices and to promote on farm biodiversity conservation.

We believe that to achieve “The Future We Want”, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, to be adopted by 2015, we need a new approach to agricultural development that reconnects with biodiversity at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels to improve food and nutrition security, to eradicate poverty, to improve productivity and livelihoods and to enhance resilience, while providing a range of ecosystem services and conserving biodiversity. But this approach cannot be built on beliefs; it must be built on science and sound economics and on evidence of practical, synergistic approaches that work at all levels. The Bridging Agriculture and Conservation initiative will leverage existing science and identify best practices that can form the basis for this new paradigm. The initiative will also identify research, information and knowledge gaps that need to be filled.

Because building and implementing a new approach to agriculture will require multi-sectoral collaboration, we are committing to work together in this critical endeavour. We also commit to raising awareness among decision makers, including farmers, policy makers, the private sector and funders of agriculture and conservation, of the need for a new approach to agriculture and conservation that can achieve multiple goals.

We agree that this new approach, integrating sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation, must be included in national and local action as well as in critical global dialogues including the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 Development Agenda, the Food and Agriculture Organization and its bodies, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and that investments in this new approach must be commensurate with the needs.

We are therefore launching this new initiative to provide measurable change by expanding the dialogue, building the scientific evidence base and charting a clear path for collaboration between agriculture and conservation in reaching the post-2015 development goals.

Participants (attended)

Izabella Teixeira, Brazilian Minister of Environment

Braulio Dias, Executive Secretary, CBD

Poul Engberg-Pedersen, Deputy Director General & Managing Director, IUCN

Emile Frison, Director General, Bioversity International

Marion Guillou, President, Agreenium and Board Member, CGIAR Consortium

Patrick Holden, Founding Director & CEO, Sustainable Food Trust

Israel Klabin, President, FBDS

Mauricio Lopes, President, EMBRAPA

Thomas E. Lovejoy, Biodiversity Chair, H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and Environment

Cristián Samper, President & CEO, Wildlife Conservation Society and Board Vice Chair, Bioversity International

Lindiwe Sibanda, CEO, FANRPAN

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP

Martus Tavares, Vice President, Government Affairs, Communication and Sustainability, Bunge Brazil

M. Ann Tutwiler, DG Designate, Bioversity International

Abdul Hamid Zakri, Chair, IPBES

Paul Zuckerman, Board Chair, Bioversity International

Invited Participants (who could not attend)

Howard Shapiro, Chief Agricultural Officer, Mars, Inc.

Ken Wilson, CEO & Executive Director, The Christensen Fund

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General of IUCN

Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of IFAD

Jose Graziano da Silva, FAO DG