



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

**NINTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,
TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

Montreal, Canada, 10 – 14 November 2003

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to welcome you to Montreal for the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). In particular, I would like to extend a warm welcome and best wishes to you, Mr. Chairman, as this is your first meeting in that capacity. Your expertise and long experience augurs well for the success of our work. I would also like to thank the outgoing Chair, Mr. Jan Plesnik, for the diligence with which he performed his functions and the support and guidance he provided to the Secretariat.

May I also take this opportunity to thank those countries that have generously contributed to enable the participation of developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition. These countries are Austria, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The value of such voluntary contributions cannot be over-stated. They are essential for ensuring the presence of the broad geographical range of expertise necessary to ensure the quality of advice given to the Conference of the Parties.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to all those who have given their time and effort to the various inter-sessional processes in preparation for this meeting. I believe that these processes, including liaison groups, *Ad hoc* technical expert groups and expert meetings, have laid a very solid foundation for the work of this body. I would also thank those Governments that have hosted or otherwise supported meetings under the Convention during the inter-

sessional period, namely: Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Such generosity is essential to the success of our work.

Mr. Chairman,

The period since your last meeting has been an eventful one. The main developments are reflected in the reports on progress in the implementation of the various programmes of work and the other documentation prepared for this meeting. I would, however, like to highlight two events of significance for the Convention process. The first is the entry into force on 11 September of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. There are now 66 Parties to the Protocol, and I would urge all Parties to the Convention that have not yet done so to ratify it as soon as possible. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will be held next February. At this stage, it is important to step up capacity-building efforts to ensure that all countries are in a position to implement the Protocol as soon as it becomes effective for them. I also would encourage all Governments—Parties and non-Parties alike—to provide the Biosafety Clearing-House with the information on national laws, regulations, guidelines and decisions on living modified organisms that is necessary for the Protocol to operate most effectively.

The second significant event is the recent ratification of the Convention by Thailand, bringing the total number of Parties to 188. The addition of this biodiversity-rich country is a further step towards making the Convention a fully universal instrument. May I take this opportunity to welcome Thailand, which will be a full Party by the time of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties next February.

Mr. Chairman,

The agenda for this meeting is a heavy one. In addition to the reports on progress in the implementation of the thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work, we have two main themes and a wider than usual range of subjects clustered under the heading “Other substantive issues”. The issues before you go to the very heart of the Convention and your recommendations will have important implications for our work over the years to come. I will therefore attempt to be brief to allow participants to make the most of the time available.

This week you will address the last two of the subjects for in-depth discussion decided upon by the Conference of the Parties in 1998: protected areas and technology transfer and cooperation. On both subjects, your work will be helped by the considerable discussions that have already taken place both under the Convention and in other forums.

Protected areas are a key element to *in situ* conservation. This week you will have an opportunity of looking at practical ways in which they can be planned and managed to optimize their potential benefits both for biodiversity and for people. An *Ad hoc* Technical Expert Group has met and mapped out a proposed programme of work. That proposed programme took into account the recommendations adopted at your eighth meeting and was further adjusted in light of the World Parks Congress, held in Durban in September. It is gratifying to note in this respect that the World Parks Congress reiterated the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity and emphasized its important place on the world stage. The message to the Convention adopted by the Congress is before you as an information document, together with the other main outputs of the Durban meeting. Last week, in response to a request by the Conference of the Parties, an international workshop on

protected areas was convened here in Montreal. The results of that meeting, including a set of recommendations are before you.

Technology transfer and cooperation is integral to the work of the Convention and the success of action taken under it. At your last meeting, you discussed certain aspects of the subject, particularly with regard to mountain biodiversity. This week, you will have the benefit of the results of the Inter-essional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties, held in March, and the Trondheim Conference on Technology Transfer and Capacity-building, which met in June. The proposed programme of work that is before you builds on the outcome of those meetings, as well as the model developed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Since most of the actions are required at the national level, the programme of work emphasizes the need for collaborative partnerships and information-brokering. We need effective support actions that will help countries take advantage of the benefits of technology. That, in turn, will accelerate their progress towards the implementation of the Convention and meeting the global target of a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by the year 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn briefly to the agenda item on “Other substantive issues”, which include:

- Further elaboration and guidelines for implementation of the ecosystem approach;**
- Development of practical principles, operational guidance and associated instruments for sustainable use;**
- Design of national-level monitoring programmes and indicators;**

- **Biodiversity and climate change; and**
- **Mountain ecosystems.**

All these items are familiar, and they have been addressed by this body in the past. They have all been the subject of in-depth inter-sessional work by expert bodies, the results of which are in the documentation before you.

The ecosystem approach is a key tool for implementing the Convention. The Conference of the Parties has already adopted principles and operational guidance to assist Parties in its application. The task before this meeting is to review those principles and guidance and develop advice on their refinement in light of the experience gained in recent years. In doing so, you are invited to take into account the relationship between the ecosystem approach and the concept of sustainable forest management, the conceptual framework of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment as well as the context of the various thematic programmes under the Convention.

Sustainable use, as we all know, is one of the three objectives of the Convention. It has been addressed on many occasions within the framework of the Convention and related processes, either explicitly or in the context of the thematic and other programmes of work. Most recently, a fourth open-ended workshop on the subject was held in Addis Ababa last May. The workshop built on the results of the three regional workshops held in 2001 and 2002 and produced the draft Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity, which are before you for your consideration.

In addition to the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines, this agenda sub-item covers two other related matters: management of forest biological diversity and sustainable use to derive products and services, and benefit-sharing, including the prevention of losses caused by unsustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest

resources; and proposals for the application of ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives, prepared by a workshop on incentive measures held in June this year.

Mr. Chairman,

Monitoring and indicators are essential to assess the status of biodiversity and to measure progress in the implementation of the Convention. They are all the more essential in light of the 2010 target and the consequent need for credible methods for determining its achievement. Exhaustive work has already been undertaken on this subject. At this meeting, you are invited to consider a note by the Secretariat based on the outcome of an expert meeting held last February. The note is intended to further work and consensus on tools and guidance for developing national-level monitoring. It also contains an indicative list of indicators for your consideration.

Another matter that has been the subject of much attention in the past—and to which the Secretariat attaches great importance—is cooperation with other conventions and processes. Without such cooperation, effective implementation of the Convention would be impossible. This week, you have before you one of the fruits of such cooperation, in the form of the assessment report on the interlinkages between biological diversity and climate, prepared over the past two years by an *Ad hoc* Technical Expert Group. I commend it to your consideration and endorsement and for transmission to the relevant bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to the Conference of the Parties to our Convention.

The final sub-item under the heading “Other substantive issues” is a follow-up to the last meeting of this body, in March this year. You will recall that, at that meeting, you had an extensive and valuable discussion on the proposed programme of work on mountain

ecosystems. At this meeting, you have before you proposed actions developed by the *Ad hoc* Technical Expert Group on Mountain Biodiversity that are intended to lend substance to the structure of the proposed programme you agreed upon in March. Needless to say, agreement on the proposed action at this meeting will greatly facilitate the work of the Conference of the Parties when it considers this major thematic programme area next February.

Mr. Chairman,

One element of the provisional agenda for this meeting represents a departure from normal practice. I refer to the item “Other matters”. Usually, this item is left open to accommodate suggestions from the floor made in the course of meeting. This time, however, there are already two issues slated for discussion.

The first issue is the integration of outcome-oriented targets into the programmes of work of the Convention, which includes outcome-oriented targets and deadlines for the implementation of the revised programmes of work on inland water and marine and coastal biodiversity. Here, you are invited to build on the recommendations of the Inter-sessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work, which considered the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In doing so, you may wish to draw upon the outcome of the London meeting “2010—the Global Biodiversity Challenge”, where numerous experts considered approaches to achieving the 2010 target and measuring progress to that end. You also have before you the conclusions of an expert group meeting held last month to consider the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. As you know, the Global Strategy was the first programme under the Convention to include measurable targets and has therefore sort of a pioneering role in this respect. At your last meeting, you requested the Secretariat to develop proposals for the integration of targets into our programmes on marine and coastal biodiversity and inland

waters biodiversity. Your advice on what is desirable, feasible and realistic in the ways of targets for the thematic programmes of work will be invaluable in developing a sense of progress in implementing those programmes and in the general context of work towards achieving the 2010 target for significantly reducing biodiversity loss set by the Conference of the Parties and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Also under other matters, you are invited to consider a note and recommendations of the Secretariat on specific gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework with regard to invasive alien species and a report on the impacts of such species on biodiversity prepared as part of the pilot project requested in your recommendation VI/4.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to draw your attention to our tight work schedule prior to the upcoming Conference of the Parties. November and December will be especially busy months. Later this month the first meeting of the *Ad hoc* Technical Expert Group on Forest Biodiversity will meet in France to consider how to review the implementation of the programme of work on that subject. In December, the second meeting of the *Ad hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing, as well as the third meeting of the *Ad hoc* Open-ended Inter-sessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity are scheduled. In January, the regional preparatory meetings for the Conference of the Parties will take place, and February will see the seventh regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties and its first meeting serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol. The agendas for both these meetings are already crowded. There is a need to deal with priority issues. The outputs of this

meeting of SBSTTA can contribute significantly to clarifying what these priorities should be.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful meeting.