



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

**TO THE WORKSHOP ON THE APPLICATION OF THE
MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT METHODS AND
TOOLS TO THE ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CONVENTION
ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7 February 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to Kuala Lumpur – the venue of the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to this important Workshop on the Application of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Methods and Tools to the issues of relevance to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This is an opportunity to discuss the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment framework and its role in promoting the objectives of the Convention. This workshop will also be an important opportunity to ensure that the Millennium Assessment addresses some of the assessment needs of the Convention.

I would therefore like to congratulate the Co-chairs and Secretariat of the Millennium Assessment for taking the initiative to organize this workshop. It is an initiative that the Secretariat is very happy to be part of. I would like also to thank the United Nations University, which is providing funds to enable a number of COP delegates from developing countries to participate in this workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2004 will be a critical year for the Convention and for the Millennium Assessment.

A few weeks ago, the Convention celebrated its tenth anniversary. Decisions taken at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties over the next two weeks will determine how Parties are to meet the target of achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity.

As you know, this target was adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its Sixth Meeting two years ago in The Hague and endorsed by World Summit on Sustainable Development a few months later in Johannesburg.

The World Summit highlighted the critical role of biodiversity in overall sustainable development, poverty eradication and human well-being and reaffirmed the Convention as the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. In fact, achieving the 2010 biodiversity target will be an indispensable step in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, especially the goals of eradicating hunger and poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Last year, the Millennium Assessment released its report, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment*. This Framework helps us understand the dependence of human well-being on biodiversity and ecosystems, and how biodiversity and ecosystems are affected by human actions. SBSTTA, at its last meeting in November 2003, noted the relevance of framework in supporting implementation of the Ecosystem

Approach. Copies of the framework have been distributed to all CBD focal points and will also be available today and throughout the COP meeting.

2004 promises to be a busy year for the Millennium Assessment. The first drafts of the Assessment have been compiled and are available for your review. In fact, your input into this review process will be critical in ensuring that the MA meets the needs of the Convention.

At the last workshop of this nature, held prior to SBSTTA-9 in November 2003 in Montreal, I outlined how I believe the Millennium Assessment can help us in reaching the 2010 target, and in monitoring progress towards it. I will briefly summarize some of the main points here:

- By highlighting the value of ecosystem goods and services, and evaluating the tradeoffs between alternative decisions, the MA will improve the basis for decision making;
- By improving our understanding of the cost of biodiversity loss, the MA should help to mobilize political will for the necessary response options; and
- By improving our understanding of the causes of biodiversity loss, the MA should help to identify effective response options.
- By setting out more clearly and convincingly the likely consequences of various scenarios, decision makers may be galvanized to consider response that has not seemed feasible before.

Of course, we also expect the MA process to help us in assessing progress towards the 2010 target through the provision of baseline data on the status of biodiversity and ecosystem services, by increasing the availability of data sets and accelerating their analysis, and by identifying suitable indicators.

Finally, and probably most importantly, the Millennium Assessment will improve the capacity for ecosystem analysis.

In this context, I would like to emphasize the importance of the sub-global assessments that are part of the Millennium Assessment. They will contribute to implementation of the Convention by increasing our information and understanding of specific ecosystems and thereby helping to identify the necessary response options tailored to particular situations.

Ladies and Gentleman

Aside from the daunting challenge of completing the assessment itself, a major challenge that I believe all of us share is to do what we can to ensure that the MA is used to its full potential.

That means that we have to make sure that we -- and our governments, as users -- are fully engaged in the process.

The main reports of the MA will undergo two rounds of peer review this year. I encourage you all to actively participate in this review. Indeed SBSTTA has recommended that the Conference of the Parties urge all Parties to do the same.

In addition, a separate Synthesis Report on Biodiversity will be prepared by the Millennium Assessment specifically for this Convention. You will have the opportunity to discuss the outline of this Synthesis today. Later this year, national focal points and other experts will have the opportunity to review the draft Synthesis Report. And SBSTTA will have the opportunity to review the final draft, and to report back to COP on its findings.

This is a major opportunity to bring the best of scientific knowledge to the service of the Convention. As I have outlined this morning, the Millennium Assessment should help us both in reaching the 2010 target, and in assessing progress towards it. The Millennium Assessment will also allow us to map out the future actions needed under the Convention in order to reach its ultimate goal, as set out in the Strategic Plan, of effectively halting the loss of biodiversity.

This workshop is important opportunity to ensure that the Millennium Assessment meets our aspirations. I wish you well in your work this morning.

Thank you.