



**CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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**STATEMENT BY**

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**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**TO**

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

**Montreal, Canada, 28 November – 2 December 2005**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the eleventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. In particular, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you, Mr. Chairman, as this is your first meeting in that capacity. I would also like to thank the outgoing Chair—Mr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah—for the diligence with which he performed his functions and the guidance that he provided to the Secretariat over the past two years.

As I have said on many occasions, a broad and geographically representative presence at these meetings is essential to ensuring that the Conference of the Parties is provided with the best possible advice from this body. I would therefore take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Governments of Austria, Denmark, Finland and the United Kingdom for their financial contributions to enable the participation in this meeting of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

In the same vein, I would also thank those Parties that have funded, hosted or otherwise supported meetings under the Convention during the inter-sessional period. These include Canada, Denmark, the European Community, Italy, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom.

I also express my thanks to all those who have given their time and effort to the various inter-sessional processes in preparation for this meeting. In particular, I would like to thank the members of the Bureau for their unfailing support, which is essential for effectively carrying out the work of this body. In spite of the large amount of work

requested by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Bureau, as usual, has maintained its commitment throughout and deserves our gratitude.

Mr. Chairman,

With your permission, I would like to give a brief overview of the items to be considered this week.

The meeting has a very heavy agenda. As you can see, there are three clusters of substantive matters:

- In-depth review of programmes of work;
- Strategic issues for evaluating progress or supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan and contributions to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and
- Other scientific and technical issues as determined by the Conference of the Parties.

In line with the multi-year programme of work adopted by the Conference of the Parties, the two programmes of work for in-depth review are those on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands and the Global Taxonomy Initiative.

With regard to the former, you have before you the results of the review conducted by the Secretariat in collaboration with relevant partners, together with an assessment of the status and trends of, and threats to, the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands and some proposals for draft outcome-oriented targets for this programme of work.

With regard to the programme of work on the Global Taxonomy Initiative, you have before you a review of implementation and effectiveness of this work programme, which was developed by the Secretariat in collaboration with the Coordination

Mechanism for the Initiative. You also have before you proposals for activities under the Initiative to support the implementation of the new programmes of work on mountain biological diversity, invasive alien species, and protected areas.

With regard to both reviews, I can only echo the words of your Chairman concerning the need for more Parties to provide information to the Secretariat to make the process more representative and comprehensive.

The cluster on strategic issues contains four items:

- Review of the draft Second Global Biodiversity Outlook;
- Review of the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, in particular the synthesis report on biodiversity prepared for the Convention;
- Incentive measures; and
- The development of goals and sub-targets for the programme of work on mountain biological diversity.

The Second Global Biodiversity Outlook will be an important means of relaying key messages regarding the future of biodiversity. A draft of the publication has been circulated for this meeting in order to seek your inputs prior to its presentation to the Conference of the Parties next year. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who participated in its preparation and to the European Community, the Netherlands and Switzerland, whose generous contributions have made the enterprise possible.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has been an ambitious and meticulous undertaking. The process was designed to provide technical and substantiated advice to policy makers regarding the future for the environment. I would like to congratulate all

those involved for their dedication and hard work over the years. The biodiversity synthesis reports, together with the summary for decision makers, provide much food for thought. It illustrates the extent of the challenges ahead if we are to meet the 2010 biodiversity target. I hope it will also serve as a call to action. At this meeting, you are invited to consider ways in which the Convention process should respond to its findings.

The item on incentive measures contains two elements:

- Proposals on the application of positive incentive measures and their integration into relevant policies, programmes or strategies; and
- Proposals on valuation of biodiversity and biodiversity resources and functions.

Incentive measures have been a long-standing issue under the Convention on Biological Diversity and are indeed the subject of a specific article in the Convention itself. You will recall the discussions at your last meeting on the removal of perverse incentives. This week, you are invited to look at ways in which positive incentive measures can be integrated into relevant policies, programmes and strategies.

Valuation of biodiversity is a key element in ensuring that biodiversity considerations are taken into account in decision-making. This is not only a requirement of the Convention—it is critical to its success. The proposals on valuation of biodiversity and biodiversity resources and functions that are before you explore existing methodologies for valuations and their application and further development. I trust that you will find them useful in your deliberations. Please allow me in this context to pay tribute to the late David Pearce of University College London for his collaboration with us in the negotiation of the Convention and his tireless efforts in this regard.

The fourth item in the cluster on strategic issues concerns the development of goals and sub-targets for the programme of work on mountain biodiversity. During your consideration of this item, I would draw your attention to paragraph 12 of decision VII/30, which notes that outcome-oriented targets are a key priority for SBSTTA and requests SBSTTA to ensure targets are linked to relevant human development goals and those of other international processes, to take into account indicators, and to consider the frameworks set out in the annexes to that decision.

The items in the final substantive cluster of your agenda essentially represent a continuation and expansion of your previous work on a number of issues.

The first is the question of the conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction. You have before you a note providing information on the status and trends of, and threats to, such resources and presenting a number of technical options for their protection.

With regard to inland water ecosystems, both new and revised criteria for the designation of Ramsar Sites in the context of Annex I of the Convention have been proposed, together with extended guidance as to how they should be applied. The Secretariat will provide an update on the outcomes of the recent ninth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on this subject. In addition, you are invited to consider the subject of streamlining and harmonizing national reporting for inland water ecosystems, including how to link such reporting to the issues of sub-targets, reporting, monitoring and the review of the implementation of the programme of work.

On forest biological diversity, since your last meeting, there have been two further meetings of the AHTEG on the Review of Implementation of the Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity, with the financial support of the European

Community and Germany, respectively. The report of the second meeting focuses on the incorporation of global outcome oriented targets into the expanded programme of work, while the third report examines mechanisms for undertaking the proposed review of implementation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the AHTEG for their work and the European Community and Germany for their support.

With regard to invasive alien species, you are being asked to consider measures to address identified gaps and inconsistencies in international regulatory frameworks. The documentation before you builds on the work of an ad hoc technical expert group that met in New Zealand in May this year. Again, I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the Group and to the Government of New Zealand for its generous support.

You are also being asked to consider ways to further consolidate the work on the use of terms and on associated instruments regarding sustainable use. The documentation before you provides a summary of the work undertaken to date, together with a number of observations and suggestions for further activities. Sustainable use is one of the three pillars of the Convention and progress in this area is therefore of the utmost importance.

In concluding your technical work, you will be asked to provide guidance for promoting synergy among activities addressing biological diversity, desertification, land degradation and climate change. In this respect, I would like to thank Finland for hosting the recent meeting of the AHTEG on Biodiversity and Adaptation to Climate Change and draw your attention to the planned joint meeting of this SBSTTA and its counterpart under the climate-change convention, which is to be held here on Wednesday evening.

Mr. Chairman,

Clearly you have a very busy few days ahead. The Secretariat, as always, remains at your disposal, to assist you with your tasks whenever requested.

Mr. Chairman,

With your permission, I would like to conclude this statement on a personal note.

As you are all aware this is my final meeting of SBSTTA as Executive Secretary of our Convention. I have been involved with the Convention process from its origins. It was a matter of great personal satisfaction to see it grow—from simply an idea, through its negotiating stage to its final adoption and entry into force. What is most gratifying is the momentum that was generated and maintained by the Parties over the years. The Convention now has virtually universal participation. The Parties have developed the Convention's initial wisdom and principles into a substantial, comprehensive and effective programme of action. We have clearly identified our vision and translated this into goals and sub-targets. We have successfully linked the Convention to other Conventions and initiatives. We have built a large global network of partnerships. It was gratifying to see the Convention process shift dramatically from policy development and consensus-building to a broadly recognized engine for achieving human development goals.

It is a matter of pride to have seen biodiversity develop over the years from being a rather marginal issue to one that is now universally seen as central to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. This development is particularly gratifying at a time when the environment has generally taken a back seat on the international agenda.

It is also a matter of pride to see the Convention universally recognized as the main instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.



This has been an exciting and memorable experience for me. I will also look back fondly at the successes—as well as some of the frustrations and setbacks—of the past seven years:

- The rapid progress made in operationalizing the access and benefit-sharing provisions of the Convention;
- The adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- The commitment to urgent action reflected in the adoption of the Strategic Plan and the targets to help achieve it;
- The recognition at the World Summit on Sustainable Development of the key role that biodiversity has to play in improving human well-being and in poverty alleviation and the endorsement by the Summit, at the highest possible political level of the 2010 target for achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss;
- The development and refinement by the Conference of the Parties of programmes of works covering all major biomes;
- The development of other tools to assist in implementation, such as those relating to environmental impact assessment, sustainable tourism, and the ecosystem approach;
- The increased acceptance and involvement of indigenous and local communities in the Convention process and the resultant progress toward the full implementation of Article 8(j);
- The substantial increase in funding for biodiversity activities in general and the work of the Secretariat in particular;

- The commitment of the Governments of Quebec and Canada to provide financial support for the Convention up to 2014;
- The expansion of the Secretariat to a size commensurate with the challenges ahead.

Most of all, I will remember the energy and vigour of your discussions and the passionate commitment to the objectives of the Convention.

None of these achievements has come easily. Complex and difficult issues at both the technical and political levels have had to be addressed. But I remain impressed by the way in which the Parties have always found solutions based on consensus – a consensus that would not have been possible without the sincere and firm commitment to advance the Convention by our Parties and all those involved.

The role of SBSTTA has been critical to this success. You have consistently provided the scientific, technical and technological advice required from you in support of the Convention. You have always worked long and hard and never given up. And you have managed to achieve this task while maintaining a spirit of friendship cooperation, compromise and professionalism. I have the greatest respect for the role you have played and the way you have played it.

I am particularly impressed by the great efforts you have made over the years to turn SBSTTA into a true forum for the exchange of scientific information, technical know-how and practical experiences and for developing the best possible scientific guidance to strengthen the scientific basis for policy-making under the Convention. This transformation is evident in the keynote presentations that have become a feature of your meetings, in the side-events and poster sessions, and in the publication of the CBD Technical Series and the first edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. It can also be seen in the growing engagement of the scientific community in matters related to

biodiversity, as evidenced by the hundreds of scientific articles—and sometimes entire issues of scientific journals—that have been devoted to biodiversity-related issues in recent years. This raised awareness on the part of the global scientific community is due in no small part to your work here.

Of course, there is yet more to do. You must collectively ensure that this Convention is successful in achieving its overriding objective—to save the future of biodiversity on this beautiful but troubled planet of ours. You must now ensure that the Convention’s work is implemented to the fullest possible extent, backed by the best possible advice.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the people, past and present who have been involved with SBSTTA, in particular the Chairs and other Bureau members who have been unfailing in their support over the years. I thank the innumerable Parties and donors for their vital financial contributions and gracious hospitality when hosting our meetings. I would also like to thank the experts who have given their time and energy to help ensure that this body—and the Convention process as a whole—was provided with the best possible scientific and technical advice. I would like to extend special thanks to the members of the Secretariat’s Division for Scientific, Technical and Technological Matters, led by Jo Mulongoy, for their outstanding efforts in preparing for your meetings. The Convention was adopted on the basis of science, and this unit constitutes—and hopefully will continue to constitute—the backbone of the Secretariat.

Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Secretariat, without whose dedication, professionalism, hard work, commitment and devotion to duty, none of the successes of the recent years would have been possible.

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

