



Achieving the
2010
Biodiversity
Target

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity



CBD

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND RAMSAR CONVENTION

**Delivered by
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

at the

**HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

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Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Human activities that impact on the natural functioning of the planet are seriously—and possibly irreversibly—jeopardizing the ability of ecosystems to meet the needs of future generations. Climate change has been identified as one of the most important drivers of the unprecedented rate of the loss of biodiversity on our planet. The impacts of climate changes on biodiversity can no longer be ignored. The evidence is all around us:

- The rise in sea levels since the beginning of the industrial revolution has increased the challenges facing the fragile and unique ecosystems of small island States.
- Australia's Great Barrier Reef may lose 95% of its living coral by 2050.
- Coral bleaching threatens the fragile marine and coastal biodiversity that today provides subsistence to half of the population of our planet and a total of more than US\$ 30 billion worth of benefits in goods and services.
- If sea level rises 10 millimetres a year, mangroves could disappear from Antigua and Barbuda as early as 2030, leaving coastal communities vulnerable to storm surges, flooding and erosion.
- In the Seychelles, tourism accounts for 51% of GDP, and the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity as a result of climate change pressures will seriously impact this industry.

Terrestrial biodiversity of Africa is also being affected by climate change. For example:

- Total available water in the Niger, Lake Chad and Senegal basins has decreased by 40-60% thus increasing the challenges of water scarcity, land degradation, food security, and human health faced by millions of African peoples.
- Here in Kenya, we have witnessed, over the last century, the disappearance of 7 of the 18 glaciers that once adorned Mount Kenya.
- Cereal crop yields including subsistence crops such as sorghum in the Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Zambia; maize in Ghana; millet in Sudan and ground nuts in the Gambia will decline by up to 5 per cent by the 2080s.

Elsewhere, the effects are also noticeable:

- In Arctic Canada climate change has resulted in a decrease in the average weight of adult female polar bears of more than 20% over the last 25 years, thus threatening the long term survival of this emblematic specie.
- Biodiversity loss in the Arctic is affecting the livelihood of indigenous people.
- The now extinct species of Golden Toad and Gastric Brooding Frog have already been labelled as the first victims of climate change.

- Africa which contributes the least to climate change will be the first to suffer, as between 25 per cent and over 40 per cent of species' habitats could be lost by 2085.

And yet these changes are only the beginning. If average global temperatures increase by another 2.5°C, an additional 210 million people will be at risk from malaria, 50 million people will face hunger and, by 2050, a million additional species will have disappeared, forever reducing the opportunities to face these challenges. Changing climatic conditions favouring invasive alien species in biodiversity hotspots such as the Cape Floral Kingdom will threaten native and endemic life, much of which is important to indigenous and local people as a source of food, fuel or medicine.

The loss of species as a result of climate change will affect our lives in a very real and tangible manner. This has been documented through a series of ad hoc technical expert group meetings on biodiversity and climate change convened between 2002 and 2005 by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity with the generous support of the Government of Finland. These meetings reaffirmed the fact that many species are facing the daunting challenge of adapting to a rapidly changing environment. Climate change, and its related impacts, is forcing species to adapt either through shifting habitat, changing life cycles, or developing new physical traits. Those species that are unable to adapt will face extinction.

I should like to add a few words at this point on behalf of my colleague, Mr Peter Bridgewater, the Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention. Mr Bridgewater regrets not being able to attend this meeting, but wishes to emphasise the importance that the Ramsar Convention has placed on the role of wetlands in adapting to, and mitigating against the effects of climate change. As the Ramsar Convention specifically deals with important protected areas of wetland ecosystems, there is particular concern around the role of protected areas—will they survive, and if so in what form? Will climate change amplify the biodiversity loss, or alter it to biodiversity change? From all the debates and observations it is clear it will require more intensive and active management of species and ecosystems *everywhere* to conserve and sustainably use existing biodiversity. There is also an urgent need to promote the possibilities for the evolutionary process to occur, as part of the process of adapting to climate change.

However, this reality is often not taken into account by policy makers, let alone the public at large. In order to increase awareness of the important link between biodiversity and climate change, I am pleased to announce that the theme for the International Day for Biological Diversity in 2007, to be celebrated on 22 May, is biodiversity and climate change. We have mobilized partners and donors to support Parties in need of financial and technical assistance in the celebration of this critical theme. Our special gratitude goes to the Government of Norway for its generous, substantial and timely contribution. For the first time, the 2007 International Day for Biodiversity will be celebrated by the family of the biodiversity-related conventions as agreed at the last meeting of the Biodiversity Liaison Group. For the first time also, eight major scientific institutions and botanical gardens will join forces. To this end, an inter-agency task force has been established with the participation of sister agencies including the members of the 2010 heads of agency task force. For the first time, the International Day for Biodiversity will be celebrated as a partnership with your Secretariat.

Indeed the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has always enjoyed the collaboration of the Secretariat of the climate-change convention. We in the Secretariat intend to continue working closely on issues related to on technology transfer, adaptation and vulnerability, and the reduction of emissions from deforestation.

I would like once again to congratulate Mr. Yvo de Boer on his appointment and convey to him my deep gratitude for organizing, a couple of day after assuming his responsibility, a teleconference with the staff of our respective secretariats to discuss ways in which we can work more closely towards the achievement of mutual objectives. This discussion will be expanded in December when the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio conventions will meet in Bonn, under the chairmanship of Mr. de Boer.

If climate change is a cause of loss of biodiversity, a healthy ecosystem can be a major contributor to addressing climate changes challenges. Therefore ensuring that biodiversity is given the best chance possible to adapt to climate change is a major challenges that need to be urgently addressed. To this end enhancing the synergies among the three Rio Conventions is of strategic importance in addressing the challenge of reducing the emission of greenhouse gasses and in ensuring that biodiversity is given the best chance possible to adapt to climate and be an integral part of the climate solution.

Your meeting in Montreal last year saw the first ever joint meeting between the subsidiary scientific bodies of our two conventions. To enhance the synergies among the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions, the first meeting of their respective chairs with the Bureau of our Convention's scientific body will be held in Paris in July 2007, in conjunction with the next meeting of the scientific subsidiary body of the Convention. The Chair of the climate-change SBSTA has been invited together with Mr. de Boer to attend this meeting.

In Curitiba in March this year, a new and enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity was born. The 4,000 participants attending the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted a comprehensive decision on biodiversity and climate change. This decision outlines practical steps that are needed to help species adapt to climate change so as to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss. Key to this is ongoing work to present recommendations on integrating climate change considerations within the multiple programmes of work of the Convention.

As a preview to the work ahead, I would like to present you, Mr. President, with a copy of the latest publication in our technical series, entitled *Guidance for promoting synergy among activities addressing biological diversity, desertification, land degradation and climate change*. This report, which is specifically dedicated to you in your capacity as President of this Conference of the Parties, was prepared with financial support from the Government of Finland and will be officially launched here tomorrow at a side-event to which you are all invited. I present this report to you, not as an indication of a process that has been completed, but as an example of what we can achieve jointly as we continue to work towards our common goals.

I thank you for your kind attention.