



Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me extend to you all a very warm welcome to the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol. It is an honour to be here with all of you today to advance the preparations for the entry into force of the Protocol and the first meeting of the Parties.

We are all indebted and grateful to India, its people and its Government, as well as to the local authorities of the City of New Delhi, for the warm welcome, and for the excellent premises made available to us in the Vigyan Bhavan Convention Center, which will greatly facilitate our work.

India has long been a pioneer in the implementation of the third objective of the Convention. The Biological Diversity Act of 2002 and the incorporation of a disclosure of origin requirement for biological material in the Patent Act are clear proof of India's commitment to the Convention's third objective. In addition, the development of the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library to document its extremely rich traditional knowledge associated with Biodiversity, has also placed India at the forefront of the protection of traditional knowledge.

In this regard, India provides an ideal setting for our deliberations and I hope that during these days we can all learn from its experience which will inspire us to arrive at a successful outcome.

I would like also to take this opportunity to convey my sincere gratitude to the Governments of Germany, Japan, Norway and United Kingdom for the financial support they provided for this meeting, enabling the participation of countries from all regions and thereby contributing to the success of our deliberations. You have once again provided evidence of your continued support to the implementation of the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol.

Distinguished delegates,

Your recommendations at this meeting will contribute to the creation of a robust basis for the implementation of the Protocol. We have the opportunity to build on its provisions with a view to ensuring that we have an effective system for sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources that works on the ground and that is able to deliver its full potential in achieving the three objectives of the Convention.

However, in order to achieve this goal, a great amount of work lies ahead.

Allow me to take a few moments to share with you some ideas which you may wish to bear in mind during your deliberations this week as well as in your future work for making the Protocol fully operational.

Firstly, it is one of my priorities as Executive Secretary to push for an early ratification and entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol. Up to date, 92 countries from all regions have signed the Protocol but only five have ratified it: Gabon, Jordan, Mexico, Rwanda and the Seychelles. Over the course of the next few months, many more countries are expected to follow suit. Indeed, I know that a number of Parties are working very hard to complete their regional or national processes for ratification. Thanks to these ongoing efforts, our expectations are that the Protocol will enter into force sometime between COP-11 and COP-12 and that the first COP-MOP will therefore be held concurrently with COP-12.

Countries have shown a clear commitment for advancing towards an early entry into force of the Protocol, and it will be important to maintain and build on this momentum in the coming months with a view to making the Protocol fully operational as soon as possible. I take this opportunity to urge Parties to the Convention that have not already done so to take steps to ratify the Nagoya Protocol as soon as possible.

Secondly, as part of my tenure as Executive Secretary and with your support, I intend to focus on enhancing the support to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. Thus, I would like to promote the role of the Conference of the Parties as a forum of exchange among Parties to discuss issues of implementation and to share experiences and lessons learned. In this regard, COP-11 can provide an excellent opportunity to take stock of progress made by Parties towards ratification, by sharing the steps

taken towards ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and exchanging experiences with a view to overcome obstacles and find constructive approaches for effective implementation. In addition, despite the heavy agenda before ICNP-2, an informal roundtable discussion will take place on Tuesday during lunch time to provide an opportunity for Parties to take stock and exchange informally on the progress made towards ratification of the Protocol. I hope that we can count on your participation.

Distinguished delegates,

I strongly believe that the Nagoya Protocol has a great potential to achieve broad societal goals: promoting the value of biodiversity, the rights of indigenous and local communities and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use. However, as we move forward in its implementation, we need to overcome some important challenges.

The Protocol represents a major step towards realizing one of the pillars of the Convention; however, we still need to further advance in ensuring that the three objectives of the Convention are closely related and linked together in order to enhance their effectiveness.

As a priority, we need to aim for a better integration and mainstreaming of ABS into the work of the Convention by fully exploring synergies and coordination between the different areas of work. Access and benefit-sharing, as one of the three objectives, is an integral part of the Convention, and it is high time that ABS becomes fully integrated so that it can become a reality on the ground.

I am convinced that further mainstreaming of ABS can facilitate its implementation at the national level by reaching out, for example, to those involved in protected areas, forests and marine environments where genetic resources are found.

Awareness-raising among different actors, whether users or providers of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, will also be essential to ensure that the Nagoya Protocol becomes a reality on the ground.

Genetic resources, whether from plant, animal or microorganisms, are used by different types of users (e.g. academics, scientists, private companies), operating in different sectors (e.g. pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, biotechnologies, horticulture, seed and crop) for a wide range of purposes; from basic scientific research, such as taxonomy, to developing commercial products which contribute to human well-being, such as pharmaceuticals. Awareness-raising of these different actors will be key to ensure that the Protocol can be fully implemented.

Another major challenge is to develop and build capacity, particularly in developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition, with a view to effectively implementing the Protocol. I would also like to remind you of the importance of supporting the capacity needs and priorities of indigenous and local communities. As custodians of biodiversity and holders of traditional knowledge, indigenous and local communities, and particularly women within those communities, need to have the capacity to be fully involved and participate in the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

Thanks to the financial support of the Global Environment Facility and the Japan Fund, the Secretariat has been able to carry out a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities to support the ratification and early entry into force of the Protocol by reaching out in particular to decision makers. In the context of this project, the Secretariat has received many requests for assistance from Parties.

The continuity of these efforts will need to be secured in order to ensure that the required support is provided to Parties to effectively implement the Protocol. In order to do so, new financial resources will need to be mobilized. In this respect, it is one of my goals to enhance collaboration with partners to enhance efforts in raising awareness and building capacity to support the implementation of the Protocol.

In summary, awareness-raising and capacity-building will be essential to support the early entry into force and implementation of the Protocol and to keep the momentum gained.

Distinguished delegates,

This week you have before you a heavy agenda including key issues for the effective implementation of the Protocol, such as capacity-building, awareness-raising, the ABS Clearing-House Mechanism, guidance to the financial mechanism, resource mobilization, and compliance with the Protocol, among others.

I am fully aware that the development of the ABS Clearing-House, as a mechanism for sharing information, plays a key role in the implementation of the Protocol, having a huge potential to contribute to building capacity, raising awareness and to support compliance. I want to assure you that the Secretariat is committed to do its best to enable this valuable mechanism to fulfil its role and to have a functional ABS Clearing-House in place by the entry into force of the Protocol.

As we move towards the entry into force and implementation of the Protocol, the Secretariat stands ready to assist you. I want to assure you of my full commitment and that of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to play a catalytic role in mobilizing resources and partners to enhance the support to Parties to implement the commitments under the Protocol. In order to fulfil this role, the Secretariat will need to be equipped with sufficient staff and resources.

I recently returned from the Rio+20 Conference and I am glad to recognize the support of the Heads of State, in their final outcome document, to the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol and to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

I would also like to share with you that during the Second High-Level Round Table (HLRT2) on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture held in Rio, I signed a joint initiative with the Secretary of the Treaty, to support the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol and support the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources.

With these remarks I wish you constructive deliberations and a successful outcome at the end of this week.

I thank you for your attention,