



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**MR. BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS**

*on the occasion of the*

**COP 12 BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY FORUM**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you to the opening of the COP 12 Business and Biodiversity Forum. As you are all aware, the theme of this forum is “Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Innovative Opportunities for Business” which I believe is extremely appropriate for this COP as it falls at approximately the half-way mark in the Biodiversity decade (2011-2020). To my mind, one of the primary objectives of this COP is to assess the implementation of the Convention, and in particular the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the associated Aichi Targets. Successful implementation requires that biodiversity be mainstreamed into business practices, and this will only be done if companies can see the opportunities that this offers to them.

In part, this is simply prudent risk management on the part of businesses. The head of the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) project, and former managing director of Deutsche Bank, Pavan Sukhdev (who will be participating in this forum) has stated that, “*The importance of business to biodiversity cannot be overstated. The private sector accounts for most of the world's production of goods. What they make and how carefully and efficiently they use earth's resources will determine the future of biodiversity conservation...*” TEEB also noted that the “ecosystem services”, resulting from natural environmental processes, represents tens of trillions of dollars per annum worth of benefits that are currently utilized for free. By the same token, the loss of these services due to environmental degradation is on the order of \$5-7 trillion per year, or roughly the GDP of China. Companies or governments must either forgo the services that this represents, or find costly alternatives.

The problem with these types of numbers is that they are so large that they defy easy comprehension, but it is possible to bring it down to a more manageable scale and show more concrete opportunities. One interesting example comes from Masoala National Park in Madagascar, where the following economic benefits from the usage of biodiversity have been



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postulated: medicines (\$1.5 million); erosion control (\$380,000); carbon storage (\$105 million); recreation (\$5 million); and other forest products (\$4.2 million). These numbers show the potential that is available to those with the foresight to realize them.

There are of course many examples of firms that have taken steps to realize these opportunities and offer positive examples that others can follow. During the next few days, you will be hearing about many interesting and inspiring examples of corporate actions that have made a positive impact in this area. You will also hear about some of the challenges and obstacles that face companies in undertaking these actions, and how these can be overcome, including through the creation of positive “enable conditions” for action.

One important corporate initiative that has been gaining traction recently is the environment profit and loss studies, pioneered by Puma but now also being undertaken by many other corporations. These show both the impact of manufacturing processes and demand for materials as well as how these impacts are distributed along supply chains (with the vast majority being concentrated at lower tier suppliers which are more distant from the “parent” company). The results are striking in that they not only show the complexity of the issue, but also a way in which companies can create real opportunities from this challenge by effectively and proactively managing the supply chain.

Supply chain management and procurement is but one of the topics that you will have the opportunity to discuss over the course of this meeting. Other panels and discussion groups, which include mainstreaming, capacity building, and reporting, coincide with the recommendations stemming from the *Fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention (WGRI-5)* which form the basis of the current negotiations. In addition, today there will be a session on tourism, the 3<sup>rd</sup> UNCTAD Biotrade Congress, a meeting of the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity, and a meeting of a new and promising initiative on Global Commodity Impact Indicators for Biodiversity. This new initiative will eventually help businesses to understand and reduce the key impacts of commodity production on biodiversity. I feel all of these events will be crucial in helping us to achieve success with regard to our efforts to implement the Convention.

I would also like to say a brief word about the Global Partnership. The creation and ongoing development of the Partnership, which stemmed from decisions taken at COP 10 and COP 11, is a concrete signal by the global community of its increasing understanding that business needs to play a critical role in addressing the serious environmental problems facing us, including the loss of biodiversity. The Partnership and associated National and Regional Initiatives represents a way for different countries, sectors and organizations to come together to share experiences and work together to find common solutions. I would encourage all of you to work with the Partnership in this area.

The Global Partnership and the Commodity Impact initiative are just two examples of the range of activities that we are undertaking in the Secretariat vis-à-vis business engagement. The programme of the forum and the specific panel discussions reflect many of the themes that we have been exploring as mandated by the relevant COP decisions as well as our ongoing endeavours in this area and our engagement with various partners.

It is my hope that this forum will help inform some of the decisions and next steps that we must undertake together in order to address this important issue. I truly believe that through our

collective efforts we can change the world and create a more sustainable and prosperous future for ourselves, in part by harnessing and benefitting from the incredible creative power of the business sector. We plan to make a short report of the results of your discussions available to Ministers, the High Level Segment, as well as to the COP Plenary. It is my sincere hope that the results of the forum will inspire greater efforts towards sustainability on the part of business, government and all other stakeholders.

I wish you fruitful discussions

Thank you.