



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR AFRICA ON ACHIEVING
AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS 11 AND 12

ENTEBBE, UGANDA

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Excellency Hon. Prof Ephraim Kamuntu
 Distinguished delegates,
 Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you all to this Capacity-building Workshop for Africa on achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12. This workshop is the fourth in a series being organized by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with partners.

It is heart-warming to see participants from all of the five subregions of Africa as well as representatives from IUCN, and other PoWPA Friends, including BirdLife International, WWF, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, and agencies GIZ, UNEP-WCMC and EU-JRC. This gathering validates the importance which your countries and the organizations you represent accord to protected areas and to Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12. I thank the Government of Japan for funding this workshop, under the Japan Biodiversity Fund, and the Republic of Korea, under the Peace and Biodiversity Initiative, as well as the Ministry of Water and Environment, the National Environment Management Authority and the Ugandan Wildlife Authority of the Government of Uganda for both hosting and providing the considerable support needed to make this workshop a reality.

Biological diversity is beset with issues of conflicts between humankind, on one side, and living organisms occurring on land, in freshwater bodies and in the marine environment on the other. Our world is rich in species, yet so ravaged by human activity that many of them could be gone by the end of this century. A great spasm of species extinction is currently occurring at an unprecedented pace, caused entirely by humans. Unlike the deterioration of the physical environment, which can be halted and reversed, the loss of biological diversity is a far more complex and irreversible problem.

Our attention remains focused on the physical environment — on pollution, the shortage of fresh water, the shrinkage of arable land and, of course, the great danger that threatens all our lives, human-induced climate change. But Earth's living environment, including all its species and ecosystems, continues to receive relatively little attention. This is a huge strategic mistake. If we save the living environment of Earth, we will also save the physical, non-living environment, because each depends on the other. But, if we work to save only the physical environment, as we seem bent on doing, we might lose them both.

The world's more than 200,000 protected areas come in many forms, on land and at sea, and occur in every country. They are places that people establish to conserve natural and cultural heritage and to sustain their benefits for society. While protecting ecosystems that are essential for life, they can support human livelihoods and aspirations and offer nature-based solutions for the complex challenges faced by the world today, including climate change.

While hard data is still scant, there is emerging evidence that the global network of protected areas is responsible, directly and indirectly, for the generation of jobs that rival in number to those provided by many large companies. The economies of many developing countries depend heavily on tourism revenue associated with protected areas, and governments increasingly consider protected areas to be true engines of local development.

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting, held in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010, adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, in which twenty headline Aichi Biodiversity Targets are organized under five strategic goals. Aichi Targets 11 and 12 fall under Strategic Goal C on improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.

In 2012, at its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties invited Parties through decision XI/24 to undertake major efforts to achieve all elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11. The fourth

edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* has reported varying levels of progress for the different elements of Aichi Target 11. However, for Target 12, the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* presents a grim picture: indications for the element preventing the extinction of known threatened species show no significant overall progress at the global level and the element conservation status of those species most in decline the data available then indicated that we are moving away from the target.

This series of workshops is being organized against the above background to obtain status information on the different elements of Targets 11 and 12 as well as priority actions that countries will undertake in the next five years to achieve both Targets. Achieving Aichi Target 11 is a critical strategy not only for conserving biodiversity, but also for securing ecosystem goods and services, enabling climate change adaptation and mitigation, and helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Your commitment and hard work will make the workshop a success through the delivery of country matrices on the status, gaps and opportunities, as well as identification of priority actions for the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and the advancement of Target 12 at the national, regional and global levels. The matrices and actions you will submit for accelerating the implementation of these two targets form road maps that can be presented as cross-cutting instruments for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Cancun in December 2016. Specifically, these proposed road maps could provide the basis for collective pledges that countries can present at the high-level segment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is one thing to commit, but quite a different thing to achieve. When we commit, we have to achieve and deliver. It is time to take real actions towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Here, I recall a famous Ugandan proverb:

“A good harvest does not grow with ease; the more diligent the farmer, the more bountiful the crop”

The beautiful city of Entebbe, located on the Lake Victoria peninsula with its famous Botanic Garden, presents a wonderful setting and I am confident it will provide the necessary impetus for our deliberations. The African continent is rich in natural resources, wildlife and pristine nature. It is also the birthplace of humanity and civilization, harbouring spectacular ecosystem diversity, ranging from savannas to marine systems, and a number of important biodiversity hotspots. However, as in many other regions, ecosystems are subjected to strong and increasing pressures, including deforestation and encroachment.

When I assumed my stewardship of the CBD Secretariat, I announced that my mantra would be “implementation, implementation, implementation”. Since then, my colleagues in the Secretariat and our partners have strived to translate this mantra into on-the-ground reality. You have already witnessed this interaction with the constant communications initiated in preparation for this workshop. Next, the workshop brings together government, NGO and intergovernmental experts to share information, tools and wisdom and to develop a shared vision for the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12 in Africa. Upon return, the CBD Secretariat stands ready to extent and mobilize whatever support we can for implementation.

Let me take this moment, once again, to thank the Ministry of Water and Environment, the National Environment Management Authority and the Ugandan Wildlife Authority for hosting this workshop. I also want to extend my wholehearted appreciation to regional and global organizations, who reiterate their support by being with us here today, and who are key partners significantly contributing to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Thank you for participating and sharing your expertise with us. Making gains towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will require strategic partnerships between

Parties, the Convention and our regional and global partners. We will work together in this spirit of collaboration and collectively strive with focused dedication to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12 and all related targets.

I am quite confident that, with our collective, coherent, focused and sincere attempts, Aichi Targets 11 and 12 will be a reality and will improve the quality of life on our planet through amelioration of ecosystem services and effective and equitable management of protected areas. I once again welcome you all and look forward to open discussions and concrete and practical outcomes.

Thank you.
