



United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity,
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at the

Seventh session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Agenda item 17.1: Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the Nagoya Protocol

Kigali, Rwanda, 1 November 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a great honour to be here with you this week and to have the opportunity to address the Governing Body of the International Treaty on this agenda item, and allow me to add my voice to those who have expressed appreciation to the Government of Rwanda for hosting us in their beautiful country this week.

Distinguished delegates,

The international community has long recognized the interdependence of all countries with regard to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and their relevance to FAO as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing. Our interrelated goals regarding conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources builds bridges for synergistic work between the Treaty and the Convention.

The Treaty is essential to ensuring the availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and guaranteeing food security, and is designed to take into account the specific needs related to the management of these resources. As stipulated in the text of the Treaty, attainment of its objectives will be achieved by closely linking the Treaty to the Convention.

As is evident from the document prepared for this agenda item, the Treaty Secretariat and the Convention Secretariat have been extensively engaged in cooperative activities. While I do not wish to reiterate all the cooperative activities summarized in the document, I do wish to highlight some of the key outcomes of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference held in Cancun, Mexico in December 2016.

The high-level segment of the Conference adopted the “Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-being”. For the first time, the discussions in the high-level segment of the Conference included the participation

of ministers from four development sectors, namely agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism. As a result, the Declaration represents an unprecedented recognition from the international community that biodiversity protection must involve different governmental and economic sectors and not just environment ministries.

The declaration outlines the commitments of CBD Parties to 18 actions for integration of biodiversity into the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism sectors to halt the loss of biodiversity across the world.

The importance of mainstreaming biodiversity across different sectors was also recognized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in decision XIII/3 on strategic actions to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. In this decision, the Conference of the Parties recognized that a number of sectors, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, depend heavily on biodiversity and that loss of biodiversity can impact these sectors negatively, potentially threatening food security, nutrition and the provision of ecosystem services vital to humanity.

It also recognized the role of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Nagoya Protocol and the International Treaty in contributing to sustainable food systems and agriculture and encouraged Parties to implement the Treaty and the Nagoya Protocol in a mutually supportive manner. I look forward to working further with the Treaty Secretariat and also with FAO through the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform announced by FAO in the margins of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, with the aim of building bridges between sectors, identify synergies, align goals and develop integrated cross-sectoral approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity into agricultural sectors.

While emphasizing the need to increase efforts to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and to achieve its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in decision XIII/1, the Conference of the Parties also initiated steps towards a post-2020 framework. To this end, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a proposal for a comprehensive and participatory preparatory process and timetable for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan. Among other things, the proposal is to provide for consultations among other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, and we look forward to engaging with the International Treaty in this regard.

On the issue of synergies, in decision XIII/24, the Conference of the Parties invited Parties to implement actions to enhance synergies among biodiversity-related conventions at the national level and to establish or strengthen mechanisms to enhance coordination among relevant authorities. The Conference of the Parties also invited the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions to collaborate in implementing a series of actions for enhancing synergies and cooperation at the international level. It also invited the governing bodies of the conventions to support implementation of these actions, encourage mutually supportive decisions and pursue their efforts to align their own strategies with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its follow-up.

Another key outcome, as we heard this morning, was the coordinated decisions under the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol on the issue of digital sequence information on genetic

resources. The decisions establish a process to facilitate consideration of any potential implications of the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources for the objectives of the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol.

The process includes the submission of views and information, the commissioning of a fact-finding and scoping study and an expert group meeting. The outcomes of the expert group will be submitted for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in July 2018. The Subsidiary Body will make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its fourteenth meeting and the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at their third meeting, which will be held in November 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

The Secretariat has also been requested to continue engaging with relevant ongoing processes and policy debates to collect information on current discussions on the relationship between the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources and access and benefit-sharing arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. In this regard, we were very pleased to participate in Saturday's special event on genomics information and to provide information on the fact-finding and scoping study on digital sequence information on genetic resources requested by our Parties, which will shortly be available online for peer review.

Distinguished delegates,

Allow me also to highlight some recent developments specifically under the Nagoya Protocol. Since the last session of this Governing Body, the number of Parties to the Protocol has increased by more than 50 per cent. The number of ratifications currently stands at 104, and we expect this to continue to increase as a number of countries are finalizing their internal processes for ratification of the Protocol. Outreach initiatives to engage countries to publish information in the ABS Clearing-House are bearing fruit, and Parties are now submitting their interim national reports on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. Information gathered will enable Parties to monitor progress and carry out a first assessment and review of the implementation of the Protocol at their third meeting, in November 2018.

The CBD Secretariat and the Secretariat of the International Treaty have continued to collaborate with a number of partners, including Bioversity International and the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, to build capacity for mutually supportive implementation of the Protocol and the Treaty. This includes a workshop on this theme for South and Southeast Asia organized with the support of the Japan Biodiversity Fund. We have also developed factsheets on mutually supportive implementation that were launched at a side event earlier this week. I would also note the joint work of the CBD and Treaty Secretariats on the development of indicators as part of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals as was discussed under agenda item 7.

Dear colleagues,

I am very pleased that cooperation between the CBD Secretariat and the Secretariat of the International Treaty has continued to flourish and grow over the past two years. Just as we work together on our areas of common interest, I believe countries can also integrate biodiversity and

agriculture in their domestic implementation efforts. I am pleased to provide any further relevant information as you deliberate on this agenda item and I look forward to many more opportunities to collaborate with our friends at the International Treaty as we work towards our common objectives.

Thank you for your kind attention.
