



Cancun, Mexico, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2016, 3 pm.

## **CANCUN DECLARATION ON MAINSTREAMING THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY FOR WELL-BEING**

We, the ministers and other heads of delegation, having met on the occasion of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, Cancun, Mexico, 2016,<sup>1</sup> on 2 and 3 December 2016,

*Declare that:*

1. It is essential to live in harmony with nature, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, as a fundamental condition for the well-being of all life, which depends on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the ecosystem services it underpins.

2. Biodiversity offers solutions to the pressing development and societal challenges that the world community is currently facing.

3. We are most concerned by the negative impacts on biodiversity caused by degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems, unsustainable land use changes, overexploitation of natural resources, illegal harvesting and trade of species, introduction of invasive alien species, pollution of air, soil, inland waters and oceans, climate change and desertification.

4. It is necessary to change human development patterns, behaviours, and activities to respect nature.

5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, which strongly reflect biodiversity, provide new opportunities to address development challenges in a transformative manner and with a perspective that integrates environmental, economic and social dimensions.

6. Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Paris Agreement, adopted at the twenty-first session of its Conference of the Parties, which notes the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity when taking action to address climate change, as well as of the Marrakech Action Proclamation adopted in November 2016 at the twenty-second session, can and should also contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and vice versa.

7. We need to make additional efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and, as applicable, the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, and facilitate closer

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<sup>1</sup> Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, 4 to 17 December 2016; High-level ministerial segment of the meetings, 2 and 3 December 2016, Cancun, Mexico.

collaboration with other initiatives adopted in international forums related to sustainable development, trade, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism, among other sectors.

And therefore,

*We commit:*

To work at all levels within our Governments and across all sectors to mainstream biodiversity, establishing effective institutional, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and incorporating an inclusive economic, social, and cultural approach with full respect for nature and human rights, tailored to national needs and circumstances and in line with other relevant international agreements, through the following actions:

1. Ensure that sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes, as well as legal and administrative measures and budgets established by our Governments, integrate in a structured and coherent manner actions for the conservation, sustainable use, management, and restoration of biological diversity and ecosystems;
2. Incorporate biodiversity values into national accounting and reporting systems;
3. Update, as necessary, and implement our national biodiversity strategies and action plans, to strengthen the mainstreaming of biological diversity;
4. Strengthen institutional support and capacities for biodiversity mainstreaming;
5. Encourage sectors that depend or have an impact on biodiversity to adopt integrated approaches for its conservation and sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources;
6. Promote the conservation, sustainable use, and where necessary, restoration of ecosystems as a basis for achieving good health, clean water and sanitation, food security and improvement of nutrition, the reduction of hunger, poverty eradication, prevention of natural disasters, resilient, sustainable and inclusive cities and human settlements, and climate change adaptation and mitigation;
7. Promote sustainable economic growth aimed at full and productive employment and decent work, reducing the global ecological footprint, combating land degradation and desertification, and the eradication of poverty in all its forms, addressing social inequality among people and regions;
8. Increase and strengthen ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures;
9. Promote generation and use of biodiversity-related knowledge and information and make it readily available to society to support decision-making at all levels;
10. Integrate biodiversity into educational programmes to raise awareness of biodiversity and its values;
11. Enhance international cooperation and encourage innovation and the transfer of appropriate technologies;
12. Scale up efforts for resource mobilization from all sources;
13. Encourage organizations such as the Global Environment Facility, development banks, and financial and cooperation institutions to support public policy coherence in programmes, capacity-building, knowledge management and implementation mechanisms, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, according to national circumstances;

14. Encourage closer cooperation and synergies among relevant organizations of the United Nations system, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization, multilateral environmental agreements, and, as appropriate, other organizations and international initiatives and processes, including those at the regional level;

15. Facilitate the active and effective involvement of all relevant actors and stakeholders, promoting gender equality and social inclusion;

16. Take action to strengthen the capacities of indigenous peoples and local communities to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity by respecting their rights, the customary sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of their traditional knowledge and practices;

17. Improve the regulatory framework for private sector activities, enhance incentives and promote tools for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources;

18. Support sustainable production and consumption throughout value chains, the safe and sustainable application of technologies, the phasing out of harmful incentives and the strengthening of positive incentives.

Bearing in mind that the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism sectors depend heavily on biodiversity and its components, as well as on the ecosystem functions and services which biodiversity underpins, and that these sectors also have an impact on biodiversity in various direct and indirect ways, we are also committed to undertake specific actions for each sector, tailored to national needs and circumstances and in line with other relevant international agreements, such as those described in the guidance annexed to this Declaration.

Life on planet Earth and our common future are at stake. It is urgent to take strong actions in a responsible manner to ensure the survival of biological wealth and healthy ecosystems that support human development and well-being. We must strive to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the 2050 Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature. Therefore, we must raise the level of ambition and political will for mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

Finally, we call upon the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, Cancun, Mexico, 2016, to take into account this Declaration in its work. We also request the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to include this Declaration as part of the report of the Conference, and to collaborate with Parties, relevant international organizations and stakeholders for the advancement of mainstreaming biodiversity.

This declaration will be forwarded to the United Nations General Assembly, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017 and the Third United Nations Environmental Assembly.



*Annex*

## **Guidance for Mainstreaming Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Tourism Sectors\***

### **Agriculture, crop and livestock**

Ending hunger, achieving food security and improving human nutrition are global development objectives. A major challenge over the coming years will be increasing agricultural production to adequately feed the growing world population. Biodiversity is the basis of agriculture as it is at the origin of all crops and domesticated livestock and the variety among them. Essential functions, such as nutrient cycling, decomposition of organic matter, soil formation and rehabilitation, pest and disease regulation, and pollination that benefit crop and livestock production, are maintained by ecosystems which are critical to sustain food production, nutrition and, therefore, human well-being. Meeting global food demand in a sustainable way is achievable, but it will require significant actions to review and adapt existing policies and practices through:

- (a) The promotion of sustainable agriculture for food security, human nutrition, health, economic development and environmental protection;
- (b) The adoption of a holistic integrated view and assessment of ecosystems and of the interlinkages between agriculture and biodiversity;
- (c) The use of integrated and cross-sectoral planning processes, reducing inefficiencies, and increasing productivity, that may include ecological intensification, while avoiding negative impacts on terrestrial, marine, coastal and inland ecosystems and its associated biodiversity;
- (d) The conservation and cultivation of native varieties, as well as farmers' landraces, locally adapted breeds and underutilized species, including those threatened by intensification of production;
- (e) Implementation of the Global Plans of Action on Animal, and Plant and Forest Genetic Resources of Food and Agriculture of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
- (f) Effective management and conservation of pollinators;
- (g) The recognition, conservation and sustainable management of soil as a living ecosystem and as one of the foundations of agriculture and food security, and the advancement of the understanding and conservation of its biodiversity;
- (h) The use of measures and incentives to promote diversified agro-ecological systems and the designation of agricultural biodiversity conservation sites, such as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
- (i) The prevention of agricultural pollution, and the efficient, safe and sustainable use of agrochemicals, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs;
- (j) The safe and sustainable use of appropriate technologies, and the integrated, efficient and sustainable management of energy, water and soil resources;
- (k) The promotion of the use of biodiversity in agricultural systems to control or reduce pests and diseases;
- (l) Sustainable consumption and production patterns, including more diversified diets based on a broader range of biodiversity, as well as the promotion of best practices in post-harvest agricultural product management in order to reduce waste and loss of food, among other measures.

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\* Additional sectors may be addressed at future meetings of the Conference Parties and their High-Level Segments.

## **Fisheries and aquaculture**

Marine, coastal and inland ecosystems host a variety of aquatic biological diversity that greatly contribute to the economic, social and cultural aspects of communities around the world. They play a significant role in ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, promoting health and reducing poverty, and are a source of employment and income and offer opportunities for sustainable development. Fisheries and aquaculture depend on the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems to maintain economic, social and ecological benefits in the long term. Biodiversity is the source of wild fisheries, and mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries policies, programmes and plans is key to sustain the habitats which serve as feeding, spawning and nursery sites which are essential for wild fish populations. Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture are key components of sustainable development. To ensure their sustainability, the following actions are needed:

- (a) Integrate the ecosystem approach into fisheries policies, programmes and plans in order to enhance sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to contribute to food security and nutrition;
- (b) Take actions for the conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources which contribute to the ongoing sustainability of stocks, to the reduction of impacts on threatened species and aquatic ecosystems and that ensure the long-term viability of this major sector;
- (c) Safeguard livelihoods, income and employment of fishing communities;
- (d) Conserve marine, coastal, and inland water ecosystems, recognizing their role as carbon stocks and sinks;
- (e) Enhance actions to reduce pollution, including noise and plastic materials that can damage marine, coastal and inland water ecosystems;
- (f) Increase efforts to develop and utilize technological innovations for monitoring, traceability and sustainably managing fisheries and aquaculture to reduce bycatch, discards and waste, and to improve methods in such a way as to guarantee long-term viability;
- (g) Promote and encourage sustainable aquaculture;
- (h) Adequately prevent, control and eradicate invasive alien species;
- (i) Develop strategies to reduce illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing;
- (j) Strengthen the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

## **Forestry**

Forests hold the majority of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. Tropical, temperate and boreal forests offer a diverse set of habitats for plants, animals and micro-organisms. Prospects for sustainable development will be greatly influenced by the state of diversity of forest ecosystems and species. They provide people with a range of benefits which extend far beyond the provision of timber. The ecosystem services that forests provide are of particular importance for the poor and vulnerable. Furthermore, for many people, and in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, they are an essential element of cultural identity, spirituality and worldview. Forestry, through the development and implementation of appropriate policies and practices, contributes to forest and wildlife protection. In this regard, the following guidance is recommended for the conservation and sustainable use of forests:

- (a) Promotion of sustainable forest management, as a dynamic and evolving concept aiming to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests;
- (b) Appreciate the importance of forest ecosystems as reservoirs of biodiversity and sources of ecosystem services, highlighting their crucial role for human development, water supply, food security, nutrition and human health, especially for forest-dependent communities;

(c) Emphasizing their relevance as carbon sinks and their critical role for developing strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation, such as activities related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, as well as for protection against natural hazards and disasters;

(d) Strengthen the implementation of the Global Soil Partnership and Global Mountain Partnership;

(e) Design and promotion of incentive packages for restoration, conservation and sustainable use of forest;

(f) Promote participation of the private sector in the development of production chains oriented to reduce deforestation and forest degradation while increasing the economic and social benefits of landholders and local communities;

(g) Promote the International Arrangement on Forests and the implementation of the United Nations Forest Instrument.

### **Tourism**

The tourism sector is one of the major sectors of the global economy. Nature-based tourism relies on biodiversity and diverse ecosystems to attract tourists. Tourism can contribute directly to the conservation of sensitive areas and habitats through a variety of activities and by raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity. There are pathways for ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism while also ensuring that it contributes positively to biodiversity, including:

(a) Integrate biodiversity into policies and models of economic and social development for tourism as an enabling agent for change;

(b) Promote tourism linkages which support decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation in the tourism sector and beyond;

(c) Implement responsible business practices;

(d) Consolidate tourism as a source of quality jobs, investment, training and development to improve peoples' livelihoods, including by working with indigenous and local communities to support their aspirations;

(e) Promote tourism as a rewarding experience for visitors, while improving the appreciation, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

(f) Encourage the adoption of practices for sustainable green and blue infrastructure, sustainable production and consumption, the conservation of landscapes and ecosystems, the use of land planning and the promotion of cultural values associated with biodiversity;

(g) Promote the development and use of technologies to transform tourism into a preservation tool for biological diversity;

(h) Implement the World Tourism Organization's Sustainable Tourism Development Programme;

(i) Invest in educational programmes for tourism operators so they can better understand the importance of biodiversity in their work;

(j) Develop and support institutional frameworks to support the development of sustainable tourism;

(k) Invest in capacity-building programmes on biodiversity for the tourism sector.

