



*Improving lives
through
biodiversity
research*

Braulio Dias
Executive Secretary
Convention on Biological Diversity
413, Saint Jacques Street, suite 800
Montreal QC H2Y 1N9
Canada

2 August 2013

Dear Braulio,

On behalf of Bioversity International, as leader and coordinator of the newly launched '[Bridging Agriculture and Conservation Initiative](#)', I would like to invite the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat to recognize this important initiative as a Biodiversity Champion for several reasons.

Bringing the agriculture and conservation sectors together to manage and sustain agricultural biodiversity is potentially the most effective way to implement the **entire set of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the Strategic Plan of Biodiversity 2011-2020**. The Aichi Targets can be reached if these sectors work together. Many of the 20 Aichi Targets strongly relate to the sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity and maintaining biodiversity within ecosystems so that society as a whole can continue to receive the benefits and services of biodiversity. These Aichi Targets cannot be met without including agricultural biodiversity and small-scale farming systems as part of the solution.

Agriculture was once seen within the conservation world as a major threat to biodiversity. Within the agricultural world, many of the problems we face – such as providing cheap and adequate food – were seen as something that could be achieved without biodiversity. Within conservation and agricultural development, there has been a lot of progress. The initiative will provide evidence-based solutions to feed a growing population, while ensuring long-term conservation of vital biodiversity, including agricultural biodiversity.

This issue is becoming more urgent. The current approaches to food security, which focus primarily on increasing agricultural productivity of a few major crops, will not lead to better nutrition and more resilient, nutritious, adaptable and ultimately more productive food and agricultural systems in the future. Likewise, the current approaches to conservation, which focus primarily on conserving biodiversity in a limited number of geographic locations, do not include agricultural landscapes and ecosystems.

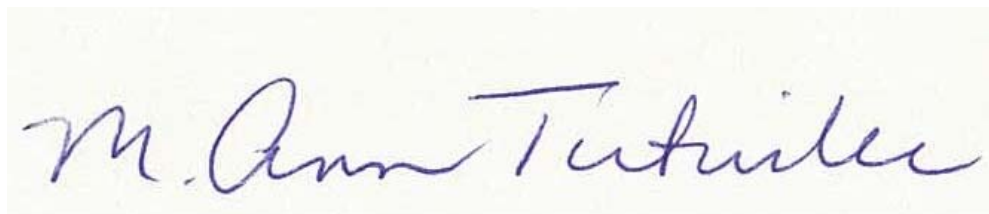
For the first time, the agriculture and conservation sectors are coming together to find solutions to these issues. The goal of the 'Bridging Agriculture and Conservation Initiative' will bring together an international and interdisciplinary team of scientists to find the synergies and provide science-based solutions integrating biodiversity conservation and food security together and provide new solutions to these dual challenges.

A year ago, global leaders met in Rio de Janeiro to shape the future of sustainable development. Ensuring food security and sustainable agriculture was a cornerstone of those global discussions. As the world faces ongoing food crises, extreme weather and population growth, biodiversity has a significant role to play but countries need evidence and information.

This initiative, with initial support from foundations including The Christensen Fund and Fundação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável, brings together world-class global agriculture, development and conservation scientists to identify these new solutions. Global leaders from more than 16 organizations have committed to finding, communicating and advocating for new solutions that are built on science, evidence and experience. In 2 years, the initiative will have provided evidence that contributes to all Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Already at Bioversity International, we are working in several protected areas in Eastern Kenya, in the Himalayas in Nepal, and West Africa, where a large body of evidence is building on how farmers use biodiversity to adapt within resilient landscapes.

We hope the CBD Secretariat will recognize this global initiative as a Biodiversity Champion, as a step towards the implementation of the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for this decade, including the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets. This visibility will also help policymakers and the public better understand how central biodiversity is to their daily lives and welfare.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Ann Tutwiler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

M. Ann Tutwiler
Director General