



**STATEMENT BY
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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN
EUROPE ON ACHIEVING AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS 11 AND 12**

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**Convention on
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**Excellency Hon. Deputy Minister,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to this Capacity-building Workshop for Central and Eastern Europe on achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12. This workshop is the fifth in a series being organized by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with partners to exchange views and plans for national protected area networks and the conservation of threatened species.

It is heartwarming to see participants from countries of Central and Eastern Europe, some participants from Central Asia as well as representatives from IUCN, and other PoWPA Friends, including BirdLife International, and agencies GIZ, and UNEP-WCMC. 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 and the German Cooperation BMZ/GIZ for funding this workshop. I thank the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Department of Biological and Landscape Diversity of the Government of Belarus for both hosting and providing the considerable support needed in making this workshop a reality.

The world is reeling under a severe ecological and economic crisis. Now, as never before, there is an unequivocal recognition of the potential of natural capital to contribute to the health and wellbeing of the planet, rather than losing it forever. Investments in the global network of protected areas contribute to sustaining and ameliorating natural capital. 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 established 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.

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya 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.

For the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its targets to be realized, we must ultimately achieve a reduction in habitat loss and critical ecosystems must be protected and conserved. Ecologically representative, well-governed, and effectively and equitably managed protected areas are a proven method for accomplishing this. Protected areas and implementation of actions identified to achieve Target 11 contribute towards ensuring that ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity are safeguarded in both the land- and seascape by protecting key habitats. In fact, protected areas address all five Strategic Goals of the Strategic Plan, and achieving all elements of Target 11 contributes towards a number of Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

In 2012, at its eleventh meeting, the CBD COP invited Parties through decision XI/24 to undertake major efforts to achieve all elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11. The fourth *Global Biodiversity Outlook* (GBO) has reported varying levels of progress for the different elements of Aichi Target 11. However for Target 12, GBO presents a grim picture; indications for the element preventing the extinction of known threatened species show no significant overall progress and the element conservation status of those species most in decline are moving away from the target.

This workshop 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 for implementation of both Targets.

To date, through this series of workshops, 75 countries from Africa, mainland Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean have identified more than 400 priority actions, addressing various elements of Target 11 as part of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans: 65 actions to improve terrestrial and inland water areas coverage by protected areas; 43 actions to improve coastal and marine areas coverage by protected areas; 54 actions to improve the coverage by protected areas of areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services; 48 actions to improve the ecological representation of protected area systems; 55 actions to make protected areas more effectively managed; 42 actions to make protected areas more equitably managed; 43 actions to create well-connected systems of protected areas; 17 actions to integrate protected areas into the wider landscape and seascape; and 43 actions to improve the contribution of other effective area-based conservation measures. The number of these priority actions may increase following completion of the series of workshops covering all United Nations regions.

The analysis of the above mentioned priority actions submitted by countries reveals that *when implemented*, these actions will not only contribute to achieve elements of Target 11, but will also contribute to other Aichi Biodiversity Targets, namely 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, and 20 directly, and 1, 2, and 19 indirectly. It is estimated that progress in the achievement of these targets in 2020 may be better compared to the midterm assessment in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*.

Achieving Aichi Target 11 is a critical strategy not only for conserving biodiversity, but 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 matrixes on the status, gaps and opportunities, as well as priority actions for the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and the advancement of Target 12 at national, regional and global levels. The matrixes and actions you will submit for accelerating the implementation of these two targets form roadmaps that can be presented as cross-cutting instruments for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at CBD COP 13 in Cancun in December 2016. Specifically, these proposed roadmaps 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 different to achieve. When we commit we have to make all efforts so as to achieve and deliver. It is time to take real actions towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The beautiful city of Minsk presents a wonderful setting and I am confident it will provide the necessary impetus for our deliberations.

Let me take this moment, once again, to thank the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Department of Biological and Landscape Diversity of the Government of Belarus for hosting this workshop. I also want to extend my wholehearted appreciation to the 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. For gains to be made toward achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets it will require strategic partnerships between Parties, the Convention Secretariat 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, 12 and all related targets.

I am quite confident that with our collective, coherent, focused and sincere attempts, Aichi Target 11 and 12 will be a reality and will improve the quality of life on our planet through amelioration of ecosystem services resulting from 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.