



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Bridging agriculture and conservation to reduce our ecological footprint**

#### *New initiative promotes implementation of Strategic Plan and Aichi Biodiversity Targets*

Montreal, 13 August 2013 – Reaffirming the critical importance of sustainable agriculture, an alliance of sixteen global agriculture and conservation leaders came together in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in July 2013 to launch a new initiative aimed at bridging the agriculture and conservation agendas by expanding the dialogue, building the scientific evidence base and charting a clear path for collaboration in reaching the post-2015 sustainable development goals.

As food and nutrition security is of paramount importance to us all, and with agriculture being the dominant user of land and water, on-going discussions of the post-2015 sustainable development goals have revitalised the long-standing debate about the most appropriate agriculture development model and the potential conflicts, or synergies, between agriculture and conservation.

Specifically, the *Bridging Agriculture and Conservation Initiative*, led by Bioversity International, aims to build and leverage existing science, including sound economics, to underpin critical progress based on evidence of practical, synergistic approaches that work at all levels, with a particular emphasis on small-scale producers, and to raise awareness among decision makers, including farmers, policy makers, the private sector and funders of agriculture and conservation.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), welcomed the new initiative as a pledge towards the Biodiversity Champions initiative, adding: “Bringing the agriculture and conservation sectors together to manage and sustain agricultural biodiversity is potentially the most effective way to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets.”

Accordingly, sixteen global leaders drafted a declaration agreeing on the need for a new agricultural development paradigm that addresses society’s current and future needs for more sustainable, socially equitable, resilient, nutritious and adaptable, as well as more productive, food and farming systems. Recognition that agriculture and food security depend not only on the biodiversity of crops and livestock but also on that in the broader landscape highlights that the way to sustainably intensify production is to respect the ability of landscapes to regenerate and provide multiple goods and services, including those required to support agriculture, and thereby simultaneously reduce the ecological footprint of agriculture.

Mr. Dias said: “This new paradigm arises from the convergence of interests of the agriculture and conservation communities through working together at the landscape level, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of unilateral, sector-based approaches that over-emphasize ‘productivity’ alone or on an over-reliance on protected areas as the only means to conserve biodiversity.”



Convention on  
Biological Diversity

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M. Ann Tutwiler, Director General of Bioversity International, said: "Bioversity International is grateful for the recognition of the Bridging Agriculture and Conservation Initiative by CBD. This initiative will provide evidence to help reach the goals of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and to make biodiversity more visible."

The initiative represents an important effort of the agriculture and conservation sectors to come together, at this level, to provide concrete, evidence-based solutions to feed a growing global population and ensure long-term conservation of biodiversity. The initiative is an important complement to the CBD programme of work on agricultural biodiversity and efforts of partners in this field such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, including its "Save and Grow" approach ([www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/](http://www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/)) and the work of its Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

"I would like to thank Bioversity International, supported by the Christensen Fund and the Fundação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável, for bringing together more than 16 global leaders spanning agriculture, conservation, private sector and public interests to commit to finding, communicating and advocating for new solutions," said Mr. Dias.

### ***Notes to Editors***

Biodiversity Champions: [www.cbd.int/champions/](http://www.cbd.int/champions/)

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020: [www.cbd.int/sp/](http://www.cbd.int/sp/)

Aichi Biodiversity Targets icons: [www.cbd.int/sp/targets/icons/](http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/icons/)

For the complete text of *Declaration: Bridging Agriculture and Conservation*, and a full list of meeting participants, please see:

[www.bioversityinternational.org/fileadmin/bioversityDocs/Announcements/Agriculture\\_Conservation\\_Final\\_Declaration\\_03.pdf](http://www.bioversityinternational.org/fileadmin/bioversityDocs/Announcements/Agriculture_Conservation_Final_Declaration_03.pdf)

### **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 166 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. For more information visit: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int).

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