



PRESS RELEASE

Cristiana Paşca Palmer assumes position as Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

20 March 2017 – Cristiana Paşca Palmer today assumed office as the new Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the principal global treaty on biodiversity. Adopted by governments in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro at the same time as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention has near-universal membership, with 196 Parties. The overarching goals of the Convention are the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. Two protocols have been adopted under the Convention, *the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety* and *the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization*.

Ms. Paşca Palmer assumes her duties following the successful conclusion of the UN Biodiversity Conference¹, held last December in Cancun, Mexico. Ms. Paşca Palmer has extensive experience in policymaking on the environment and sustainable development, as well as with the implementation policies, programmes and projects at the national and international levels.

A Romanian national, Ms. Paşca Palmer most recently served, from November 2015 to January 2017, as Romania's Minister for Environment, Waters and Forests. In that capacity she headed the Romanian delegation at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, where she signed the agreement on behalf of Romania, the 2016 Marrakech Climate Change Conference, and the 2016 UN Biodiversity Conference in Cancun. As Head of the Ministry of Environment, Ms. Paşca Palmer oversaw eight individual agencies—including the National Environmental Protection Agency, the Environmental Fund Administration, the National Forest Authority, Romania's Water Administration, and the Romanian Meteorological Administration—totaling approximately 30,000 staff and a \$250 million annual budget.

Prior to serving as Minister for Environment, Waters and Forests, Ms. Paşca Palmer was Head of the Climate Change, Environment and Natural Resources Unit within the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development between 2011 and 2015. Her duties included overall management of European Union international cooperation and development in the areas of environment, climate change, forests, desertification, and disaster risk reduction. One of the most significant biodiversity related efforts conceived and led by Ms. Paşca Palmer was the design of the EU's "Biodiversity for Life Initiative" (B4Life), a \$1.2 billion comprehensive flagship program, financing innovative initiatives linking biodiversity conservation with food security and green economy

¹ 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, Second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing.



transformation. She was also a Policy Analyst on International Relations and the Western Balkans in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action, from 2010-2011.

Ms. Pașca Palmer also brings experience in mobilising civil society in support of the environment. She was the founder and president of Green Cross Romania and was Country Director Romania for Fauna & Flora International (FFI), often referred to as the world's first conservation society, where she, among other things, managed FFI's in-country operations in Romania during the implementation of a \$8.8 million GEF and World Bank Biodiversity Conservation Project, which pioneered the first system for protected areas' management in Romania in the post-communist era.

Born in 1968, Ms. Pașca Palmer holds a PhD in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, with a focus on development economics, business management and environmental sustainability. She holds a Master in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a Master of Science in Systems Ecology and Management of Natural Capital from the University of Bucharest. Ms. Pașca Palmer is the recipient of U.S. and European academic scholarships (Edward S. Mason, Joint Japan/World Bank, Marie Curie, and Henry R. Luce), and was awarded the Gorbachev Award for "significant contributions to the environment" by former USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev. She enjoys the outdoors and has a great interest in ethnography and folklore.

Ms. Pașca Palmer joins the Convention at a crucial moment, with only four years remaining in the UN Decade on Biodiversity, and for Parties to achieve the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. She will lead the preparations for the fourteenth Conference of the Parties which will take place in Egypt in 2018, the 25th anniversary of the year that the Convention entered into force in December 1993, and will also oversee the process for Parties to develop the set of commitments that go beyond 2020.

Ms. Pașca Palmer succeeds Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, who served as Executive Secretary between January 2012 and February 2017.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is based in Montreal, Canada.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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 196 Parties so far, 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 and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 96 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.
