



CBD

**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

Please Check Against Delivery

**HAMDALLAH ZEDAN
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

**THE OPEN-ENDED INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING ON THE
MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES UP TO 2010**

Montreal, Canada, 17-20 March 2003

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

May I first welcome you all to this Open-ended Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010.

At the outset, I would like to express, once again, my gratitude to Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom for the financial contributions they made to enable the participation of so many developing countries and countries with economies in transition in this meeting and in last week's eighth meeting of SBSTTA.

Those of you who were here last week need no reminding of the encouraging progress made by that meeting of the SBSTTA on several of the key issues facing the Convention. I very much hope that this meeting will be equally successful.

Mr. President,

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this inter-sessional meeting for the future of the Convention, coming as it does in the wake of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The World Summit raised the profile of biodiversity issues and the Convention to unprecedented levels. This is gratifying, and is a testimony to the success of the work that has been accomplished within the Convention

process over the years. But it brings with it greater responsibilities, given the recognition at the highest possible level of:

- First, the critical role that biodiversity has played, and continues to play, in overall sustainable development and in meeting the needs of the world's poor and in poverty alleviation; and
- Second, the Convention as the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The Plan of Implementation adopted by the Summit echoes the mission statement in the Strategic Plan for the Convention and speaks of the need for a more efficient and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. Your work this week will greatly assist in the quest for this improved efficiency and coherence, which is essential if we are to make a major impact on decision makers and leading development and finance institutions in order to meet the target of a significant reduction of biodiversity loss by 2010, adopted by the Conference of the Parties and endorsed by the World Summit.

The challenge, in a nutshell, is to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention process by giving it a long-term focus through a well-thought and consistent multi-year programme of work, to identify better ways to assess progress made, to give a solid foundation for the realization of commitments in Johannesburg, and to advance

cooperation by assessing relevant legal and socio-economic aspects of technology transfer.

The agenda for this meeting has been structured to respond to these challenges. Under the first substantive item, you are being asked to consider the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as it relates to the Convention process and to make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on suitable follow-up measures.

The next item concerns the Strategic Plan of the Convention, the adoption of which represented a milestone in the work of the Convention. But for the Plan to serve its intended purpose there is a need for a mechanism to review its implementation on an ongoing basis. In this connection, you are invited to recommend possible modalities and means for future evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan. As requested by the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat has undertaken a review of current national and thematic reporting under the Convention and the overall needs in terms of evaluation of the Strategic Plan. Some possible modalities, means and recommendations are suggested in the documentation prepared by the Secretariat.

Mr. President,

One of the primary reasons why the Conference of the Parties called this meeting was to consider the multi-year programme of work for the Conference of the Parties up to 2010, thus covering its eighth,

ninth and tenth meetings. This issue is obviously closely related to the priorities identified in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit. It is also clearly linked with the achievement of the goals of the Strategic Plan, which, if it is to be meaningful, must form the basic framework for action over this period. You are therefore invited to look at the priorities set in Johannesburg and the goals in the Strategic Plan and, on that basis, develop a focused programme of work that is driven by the need to fulfil the commitments made at the World Summit and the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. You may wish to consider the role of the existing programmes of work, the role of various stakeholders and the role of the Parties themselves, including the need for them to report on their achievements and constraints. Ultimately, your task is to look at how the goals of the Strategic Plan and the 2010 target can be achieved and by whom. In doing so, you may have to look beyond the programmes of work under the Convention and identify areas where cooperation needs to be strengthened. You may have to consider the need for a strategic approach with clear milestones and the means for monitoring progress toward the 2010 target.

As you can see from the documentation under this item, a number of matters have been proposed, especially for in-depth consideration. It is clearly not feasible to include them all. Indeed, at its meeting last week, SBSTTA recommended that in light of the current heavy workload of the Convention, the addition of new items for in-depth consideration is not desirable until after 2010, with the exception of in-depth consideration of island biodiversity. In addressing this item therefore, you may wish to consider which proposed issues could be

subsumed under those existing programmes and which require in-depth consideration to advance the Strategic Plan and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit.

Mr. President,

The next item of the agenda concerns the legal and economic aspects of technology transfer and technology cooperation. This is an issue that the Conference of the Parties has identified for in-depth consideration at its seventh meeting. At the request of the SBSTTA Bureau, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties has agreed that SBSTTA will discuss the scientific and technical aspects of the issue, while the present meeting should consider the legal and economic aspects before consideration of technology transfer by SBSTTA at its ninth meeting. In this regard, the fourth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, to be held next June, will focus on technology transfer and capacity-building and is expected, as has been the case with previous Trondheim conferences, to provide some input to the ninth meeting of SBSTTA and the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Under this item, you are invited to make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on how to fully implement Article 16 and related articles of the Convention, and, in particular, on how transfer and cooperation could best contribute to achieving the three main objectives of the Convention.

Mr. President,

The final item on your agenda concerns the third objective of the Convention. As you will recall, the Plan of Implementation that emerged from the World Summit includes an undertaking to negotiate, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. Since this element is intimately related to one of the three objectives of the Convention and is directly relevant to the programme of work of the Convention, it was decided, in consultation with the Bureau, to include it as a distinct agenda item for this meeting.

The Convention on Biological Diversity establishes an international framework for access and benefit-sharing. It also establishes an international structure within which Parties can cooperate on the implementation and elaboration of such a framework.

The Convention's provisions on genetic resources represent the international community's best effort to define general principles for the use of genetic resources from all sources. Those principles have been given a more concrete expression in the Bonn Guidelines that were adopted by the Conference of the Parties last April. At the same time, the Conference of the Parties has recognized that there may be a need for a package of measures to complement the Guidelines and to address the specific needs of Parties and other stakeholders in the implementation of access and benefit-sharing arrangements.

It is clear from the negotiations on the Bonn Guidelines that the political will exists for progress to be made on access and benefit-sharing. It is also clear that the Convention provides an effective framework for discussion and consensus-building on the issue. At this meeting, you are invited to consider a number of practical questions. They relate, for example, to the scope and nature of the international regime, its relationship to the Bonn Guidelines, the process required to establish it and the timetable for that process to be completed. In short, the challenge is to reach agreement on the best approach to deliver on the commitments made in Johannesburg. I invite you to work constructively to that end and to formulate clear recommendations to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Mr. President,

The tasks before you have been clearly defined by the Conference of the Parties. I hope that the documents and draft elements for recommendations prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau will facilitate your work. I invite you to build upon them over the next four days and come up with proposals that will reflect a consensus among all Parties on the future direction that our Convention is to take. By doing so, you will not only expedite the work of the Conference of the Parties, you will also send a clear signal that the issues raised in Johannesburg are being addressed under the Convention, and that Parties and other participants in the Convention process are fully aware of the challenges of sustainable development and poverty eradication and are committed to meeting them.

Mr. President,

In closing I wish you every success in your work and assure you that, as always, you can count on the full support of the Secretariat in your work over the next few days. I thank you for your attention.