



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

**TO THE COUNCIL OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
FACILITY AT ITS TWENTY-SECOND MEETING**

Washington, D.C., USA, 19 – 21 November 2003

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Chief Executive Officer,
Distinguished members of the Council,
Colleagues,

I am pleased to have this opportunity once again to address the GEF Council and to report briefly on some of the main developments under the Convention on Biological Diversity of relevance to your work.

The first Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, formally entered into force on 11 September 2003, ninety days after the Republic of Palau was counted as the 50th State to ratify the Protocol on 13 June. Today the total of ratifications/accessions to the Protocol has increased to 68. As one of the tools for implementing specific provisions of the Convention regarding living modified organisms, focusing on regulating their transboundary movement, the entry into force of the Protocol provides another convincing testament on the importance national governments have attached to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the global consensus on the urgent needs to take action to curb the rate of biodiversity loss.

While celebrating this major advancement under the Convention, I should mention the contribution of the Global Environment Facility in assisting countries to prepare for the entry into force of the Protocol through the GEF Initial Strategy on biosafety adopted by the Council in November 2000, and through the GEF-UNEP project on development of national biosafety frameworks and other demonstration projects. Almost all developing countries that have ratified the Protocol have been involved in the GEF-financed biosafety activities. With the exit of the GEF Initial Strategy for Assisting Countries to Prepare for the Entry Into Force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, it is high time now to undertake further projects and operational framework to address capacity building needs in biosafety in particular for enabling effective participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House and in the implementation of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. We are pleased to note the project proposal on building capacity for effective participation in the biosafety clearing-house of the Cartagena Protocol, which is being resubmitted by the United Nations Environment Programme for your consideration. This project and other activities through development of further operational framework for supporting the Cartagena Protocol will demonstrate a critical role of the Global Environment Facility in making the Protocol an effective international instrument.

At its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties agreed that in the event that the Protocol enters into force more than one year after the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties but before the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP/MOP1) should be convened in conjunction with the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Accordingly, COP/MOP1 is scheduled to take place in conjunction with the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, e.g. from 23-27 February 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Building on the work and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, or ICCP, COP/MOP1 will take decisions on a number of issues, including decision-making procedures, information sharing/biosafety clearing-house, capacity building, handling, transport, packaging and identification, compliance, as well as liability and redress. Of particular relevance to the Global Environment Facility is that COP/MOP1 will elaborate the provisions of Article 28 of the Protocol with respect to the financial mechanism, including eligibility criteria and programme priorities under the Protocol as well as relationship with the institutional structure entrusted to operate the financial mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn now to the ninth meeting of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), which was held last week in Montreal, Canada. The main themes of that meeting were protected areas and technology transfer and cooperation, two new crosscutting issues for the Convention. It also reviewed a range of issues on which the Conference of the Parties has requested for advice.

The Subsidiary Body recognized that existing system of protected areas are not representative of the world's ecosystems, habitat types and biomes, species and marine areas, of which less than 1 per cent are protected, are particularly under-represented, and agreed on the objective of establishment and maintenance by 2010 of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network of protected areas and areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity. It adopted the elements, goals and targets of the programme of work on protected areas. The recommendations will be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting.

As you recall, SBSTTA at its eighth meeting considered the scientific, technical and technological aspects of technology transfer and cooperation, and the Open-ended Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 held last March made recommendations on legal and socio-economic aspects of technology transfer and cooperation. Building on these recommendations and the outcome of Norway/United Nations Conference on Technology Transfer and Capacity Building held in Trondheim last June, SBSTTA at its ninth meeting adopted the elements of a programme of work on technology transfer and cooperation, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting.

The Subsidiary Body further reviewed the principles and guidelines of the ecosystem approach, and agreed that the priority at this time should be on facilitating the implementation of the ecosystem approach as a primary framework for addressing the three objectives of the Convention in a balanced way, and a potential revision of the principles of the ecosystem approach should only take place at a later stage, when the application of the ecosystem approach has been more fully tested. The review benefited from the report of an expert meeting on the further elaboration and guidelines for implementation of the ecosystem approach, which was held in Montreal in July 2003.

Following the three workshops on sustainable use before COP-6, the Secretariat organized a fourth open-ended workshop on the sustainable use of biological diversity in Addis Ababa in May 2003. The workshop produced the draft Addis Ababa principles and guidelines on the sustainable use of biodiversity. The workshop on incentive measures, which was held in June 2003 in Montreal, elaborated draft proposals for the application of ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives, and provided initial input on the application of the Addis Ababa principles and guidelines. The Subsidiary Body endorsed the draft Addis Ababa principles and guidelines on sustainable use of biodiversity and proposals for the application of ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives, and decided to submit them to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting.

At its eighth meeting, SBSTTA adopted the structure of the proposed programme of work on mountain biological diversity, including its elements and goals. An Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Mountain Biological Diversity was convened in July 2003 in Rome to review the suggested actions contained in the proposed programme of work. As a result, the

Subsidiary Body at its ninth meeting finalized its recommendations on the proposed programme of work on mountain biological diversity as a set of actions addressing characteristics and problems that are specific to mountain ecosystems, and aiming to reduce significantly mountain biological diversity loss by 2010 at global, regional and national levels, through the implementation of the three main objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The proposed programme of work on mountain biodiversity has been recommended to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

SBSTTA is not mandated by the Conference of the Parties to submit recommendations on financial matters. Nevertheless, there is no question that the introduction of these three new programmes of work and the adoption of sustainable use principles and guidelines will ultimately entail new or additional guidance to the financial mechanism when they are considered by the Conference of the Parties.

The Subsidiary Body also reviewed the progress on the implementation of the thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work under the Convention, as well as the status of designing national-level monitoring programmes and indicators, ways and means for promoting implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, Global Taxonomy Initiative, and issues related to invasive alien species. It stressed the need to identify priority measures required for achieving, and assessing progress towards the achievement of the 2010 target, and called for clear and specific guidance to the financial mechanism regarding adequate funding to developing countries for implementing these programmes of work..

Mr. Chairman,

The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity has addressed the issue of the inter-linkages between biodiversity and climate change at several of its meetings. They have expressed concern about the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, in particular on forest biodiversity, coral reefs, and drylands, and they have called upon SBSTTA to develop advice on how biodiversity considerations can be integrated into implementation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol.

At its ninth meeting, SBSTTA considered the report of an ad hoc technical expert group established to address this matter. SBSTTA endorsed the conclusions of the expert group and transmitted them to the UNFCCC. We expect that the SBSTA of the UNFCCC will consider these issues during COP-9 in Milan next month.

There are two general points of relevance to this discussion to highlight. SBSTTA noted that:

- There are opportunities to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in ways that are mutually beneficial and synergistic, and that contribute simultaneously to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and other international agreements, all within broader national development objectives;
- The ecosystem approach provides a framework for the integrated management of land, water and living resources and that its application can facilitate the formulation of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects that also contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;

Concerning the issue of adaptation in particular, the ad hoc technical expert group noted the following:

1. Adaptation is necessary not only for the projected changes in climate but also because climate change is already affecting many ecosystems.
2. Reduction of other pressures on biodiversity arising from habitat conversion, over-harvesting, pollution, and alien species invasions, constitute important climate change adaptation measures.
3. Conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecosystem structure and function are important climate change adaptation strategies because genetically-diverse populations and species-rich ecosystems have a greater potential to adapt to climate change.
4. The protection, restoration or establishment of biologically diverse ecosystems that provide important goods and services may constitute important adaptation measures to supplement existing goods and services, in anticipation of increased pressures or demand, or to compensate for likely losses.

We look forward to these points being taken on board as GEF proceeds with its pilot activities under the operational approach to adaptation.

Mr. Chairman,

At its sixth meeting, the Conference of the Parties embarked on a mission to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth, and adopted a set of strategic goals and objectives as a strategic plan for the Convention. This target was further endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Since then, the 2010 target has become a resounding framework for organizing global efforts to meet the biodiversity challenge under the Convention, and thus has impacted on each and every agenda item of the Subsidiary Body at its ninth meeting. SBSTTA commended an approach for integrating targets in the programme of work, by which a small number of outcome-oriented targets may be complemented by process-oriented targets, milestones and deadlines, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, and recommended to establish the 2010 target as an interim milestones in achieving the Millennium Development Goal 7 of ensuring environmental sustainability by 2015.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to achieve this target will require the provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries. This is where the role of the financial mechanism should come into play. Thus I would like to challenge the Council of the Global Environment Facility with the question: how the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism of the Convention will contribute to the realization of the 2010 target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level. For instance, how much additional financial resources will the institutional structure be able to mobilize for the purposes of the 2010 target; how available financial resources can be realigned to the needs of achieving the 2010 target; can biodiversity projects financed by the financial mechanism explicitly state how they might contribute to the achievement of the 2010 target; can biodiversity projects financed by the financial mechanism be marked by particular guidance from the Conference of the Parties; etc.

Clearly enough, only when it becomes integrated into national biodiversity strategies and action plans can the 2010 target have requisite impact on national-level implementation. As you may recall, the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties requested the financial mechanism to provide financial support, as a priority, for the elaboration, development and revision as necessary of national biodiversity strategies and action plans,

and for activities which assist their implementation. The COP6 guidance clearly provides an opportunity for countries to address the 2010 target through their national biodiversity planning processes. It is imperative to afford prompt attention to implementation of this guidance from the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will enable countries to implement the 2010 target in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now say a few brief words on the upcoming seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Conference of the Parties will consider progress made in the implementation of the programmes of work on forest biological diversity; biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands; and agricultural biological diversity. These programmes will be the subject of in-depth review, elaboration and refinement at subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The Conference of the Parties will only need to pay attention to a number of specific matters as a result of various requests made by the Conference of the Parties in decisions taken at previous meetings. However, the Conference of the Parties is expected to review, further elaborate and refine the programmes of work on biological diversity of inland water ecosystems and marine and coastal biological diversity, which were both initially adopted at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in 1998.

The Conference of the Parties is expected to consider a range of recommendations arising out of inter-sessional meetings, in particular the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, including the adoption of three programmes of work for mountain biodiversity, protected areas and technology transfer and cooperation. As mentioned above and also in my previous statement to the Council, SBSTTA also provided recommendations on identification, monitoring, indicators and assessments (Article 7); Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; ecosystem approach; sustainable use (Article 10); incentive measures; biological diversity and tourism; alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species (Article 8(h)); which are also on the agenda of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Article 8(j) and related provisions as well as access and benefit-sharing as related to genetic resources (Article 15) are the subjects for discussions at the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing and the third meeting of the Open-

ended Ad Hoc Inter-Sessional Working Group on the Implementation of article 8(j) and Related Provisions. The two meetings will be held back-to-back in early December 2003 in Montreal, and are expected to provide substantive advice for consideration by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Conference of the Parties is also expected to adopt a multi-year programme of work for the Conference of the Parties up to 2010. As you may recall, it was recommended by both SBSTTA and the Inter-sessional Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010 that until 2010, no new items for in-depth consideration should be added to its agenda, with the exception of island biodiversity, and the in-depth review of existing programmes of work should be treated as a priority. At the same time, the Conference of the Parties would also look at progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and in achieving the 2010 target. It would also look at the operation of the mechanisms in place in support of implementation, including the financial mechanism and the clearing-house mechanism.

Financial resources and mechanism (Articles 20 and 21) has been a standing item for each and every ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties. At its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties is expected to consider the financial needs of implementing various programmes of work and the Strategic Plan of the Convention, and in particular review new and additional financial resources needed for achieving the 2010 target to reduce significantly the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth, as adopted by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. As practice, the Conference of the Parties will provide further guidance to the financial mechanism as well as make arrangements for the third review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

The preparation for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties is well under way. I am pleased to take note that all documents concerning financial resources and mechanism have reflected joint efforts through substantial consultation between the two secretariats, and relevant staff have continued the path of undeterred collaboration that has been built up in the past few year.

On behalf of the Convention, I should like to invite Council members and other stakeholders to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties as well as the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol next February in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Your participation and contribution will once again prove to be critical in building global consensus on the efficient and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention and the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful meeting.