



**Secretariat of the  
Convention on Biological  
Diversity**

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY  
PROTECT BIODIVERSITY IN DRYLANDS

**22 May  
2006**



ACHIEVING THE 2010 TARGET!

**Statement by**

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Convention on Biological Diversity**

**to the**

**Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant  
Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at its first  
session**

**Madrid  
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**Check against delivery**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At its sixth meeting, in 2002, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recognized that the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will have an important role for the conservation and sustainable utilization of agricultural biological diversity, for facilitating access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their utilization. It thus recognized that your Treaty will make a significant contribution to the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention in the strategic area of agricultural biodiversity.

For this reason, the Conference of the Parties, at the same meeting, stressed the need for the expeditious entry into force of your Treaty and called on the 188 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other Governments to give priority consideration to its signature and ratification. Two years later, at its seventh meeting, held in Kuala Lumpur in 2004, the Conference of the Parties again urged Parties and other Governments to ratify the Treaty as an important instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources leading to hunger reduction and poverty alleviation.

This historic meeting could not have found a better host than Spain, one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in Europe and a country that has made a significant contribution to the negotiation, and now the implementation, of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as exemplified by its unique contribution to the success of the last meeting on access and benefit sharing, held in the historic city of Grenada early this year. Let me therefore pay tribute to the authorities of Spain for their continued commitment to protecting life on Earth. Like Spain, all the Parties of your Treaty are also Parties to the Convention. This bodes well for the future of the Treaty, and for close cooperation between our two instruments. Indeed, the complementarity between your Treaty and the Convention on Life on Earth is enshrined in the very objective of your Treaty as reflected in the provisions of its first article.

Articles 19 and 20 of the Treaty and decision VI/6 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity require cooperation between the secretariats and the governing bodies of the two instruments. I am pleased that we were able quickly to conclude a memorandum of cooperation between the Convention Secretariat and the interim Secretariat of the Treaty. I can assure you that the Convention Secretariat will continue to work closely with the Treaty Secretariat to ensure that the two instruments go forward in continued harmony.

Cooperation between the Convention and the Treaty builds upon a long and rich history of cooperation and joint activities between the Convention and FAO and its Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. FAO is a lead partner in the Convention's programme of work on agricultural biodiversity. Recently, at its eighth meeting, held in Curitiba, Brazil, in March this year, with more than 4,000 participants, including 122 Ministers and other Heads of Delegation, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention highlighted this role, and invited FAO and the CGRFA to play a leading role in the review of this crucial programme of work. It also adopted a number of

recommendations specifically addressed to this Governing Body and the Treaty Secretariat:

First, in its decision on agricultural biodiversity, the Conference of the Parties “invited the governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to take note, at its first meeting, of the cross-cutting initiative (on biodiversity for food and nutrition) and to collaborate in its implementation” (decision VIII/23, para. 10). This is an important initiative that highlights the role of biodiversity in not only sustaining food production but also underpinning dietary diversity, and combating hunger and malnutrition. The new initiative, adopted at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, aims to promote and improve the sustainable use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to food security and human nutrition, as a contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (particularly target 2 of Goal 1 to halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger) and as a means to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity. FAO has been a key partner in developing and now implementing this initiative, along with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI).

Secondly, the same decision invites the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to examine, within the context of its work, priorities and available resources, the potential impacts of genetic use restriction technologies, with special consideration of the impacts on indigenous and local communities and associated traditional knowledge, smallholder farmers and breeders and Farmers’ Rights.

Finally, in its decision VIII/16, on cooperation, the Conference of the Parties, welcomed ongoing cooperation with the FAO, particularly the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and other FAO processes, and invited the Secretariat of the International Treaty to join the liaison group of the biodiversity-related conventions. This liaison group is an informal body comprising the heads of the secretariats of the Convention on Migratory Species, CITES, the Ramsar Convention, the World Heritage Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, to exchange views on matters of common interest.

The implementation of the objectives of your Treaty will make an important contribution to promoting sustainable livelihoods for the people of this world through the sustainable use of biodiversity. It will also contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the 2010 biodiversity target. As recognized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its seventh meeting, your Treaty will also make a significant contribution to assisting the international community in finalizing the negotiation on the international regime on access and benefit sharing. At the Curitiba meeting, the Parties have agreed to finalize the negotiations on an international regime in 2010, at their tenth meeting. In this regard, the development of the Standard Materials Transfer Agreement on your agenda will be particularly important.

Accordingly, we in the Convention Secretariat look forward to the establishment of a strong partnership with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food

and Agriculture and I assure you that we shall spare no effort to achieve this strategic objective.

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