



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity



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DIVERSITY
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**BIODIVERSITY
AND AGRICULTURE**

STATEMENT

by

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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on

“CLIMATE CHANGE, REDD AND BIODIVERSITY”

on the occasion of the

**International Expert Meeting on Potential Impacts of
“Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation”
on Indigenous and Local Communities**

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ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every day we are learning about the negative impact of climate change on biodiversity and human society.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, if temperature increases exceed 1.5-2°C, 20-30 per cent of known plant and animal species will be at risk of extinction. This is especially relevant for those species already at risk due to other factors such as low populations, habitat fragmentation and loss, pollution and limited climatic ranges. Overall, as many as one million species may face increased threats of extinction as a result of climate change.

In Asia, for example, up to 50 per cent of biodiversity is at risk due to climate change while as much as 88 per cent of reefs may be lost over the next 30 years. Furthermore, as many as 1,522 plant species in China and 2,835 plants in Indo-Burma could become extinct.

A warming greater than 3°C will have projected negative impacts on agricultural production in all regions, while elevated carbon dioxide levels are expected to have negative impacts on livestock health, especially in low-nitrogen environments.

In South-East Asia, precipitation extremes will increase with shifts in the timing of important precipitation events. In Indonesia, for example, climate change is expected to increase the chance of a 30-day delay in the onset of monsoon rains by as much as 40 per cent by 2050.

More specifically, the research commissioned for the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has revealed that indigenous and local communities, although perhaps the least responsible, will in fact bare the brunt of the climate-change crisis. Ironically, it is the poorest of the poor who may suffer the most – those who can least afford to relocate and those whose lives are inextricably tied to their traditional lands and waters and the biodiversity on those territories.

Furthermore, as the world contemplates possible solutions to climate change, such as schemes to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), we have also learned even more recently that the implementation and impact of such schemes potentially could be very good or very bad for the world's indigenous and local communities and the biological diversity on which we all depend.

While I can understand the anguish of indigenous and local communities as they find themselves not just as the victims of climate change but also unfairly impacted upon by possible solutions, I also see this moment in history as an opportunity for indigenous and local communities to contribute to the formation and implementation of possible solutions, such as REDD schemes, to ensure that their traditional knowledge, their rights and biological diversity are protected and enhanced in the process.

Efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation have the potential to contribute significantly to achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity – especially in terms of the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity. However, they may also be harmful, for example, some afforestation projects involve the planting of monocultures of invasive species such as eucalyptus at the expense of native species in grasslands and agricultural landscapes, which can adversely affect landscapes.

That is why we are gathered here – to ensure that the implementation of climate-change solutions does not run counter to the objectives of the Convention and the rights of indigenous and local communities.

Only by influencing the development and implementation of schemes such as REDD can we ensure that benefits accrue for both biodiversity and the world’s indigenous and local communities.

Of course, we could do nothing and risk the sixth major extinction crisis on planet Earth – an extinction that we may very well be part of. Or we could also stand back and watch various solutions unfold, and solutions that could very well cause as many problems as they solve.

But this is not what people of good conscience do; this is not what people who love the Earth and the myriad of forms of life it offers do; this is not what we would do.

By gathering here, you have a great opportunity to acquire information from the various agencies present and to influence how different climate change solutions will be developed and implemented.

In fact, you have an opportunity to ensure that in the implementation of such schemes, the objectives of the Convention and rights of indigenous and local communities will be advanced.

How to do this? By ensuring you have all the information available to make informed decisions; by ensuring that you are seen as necessary partners in addressing climate change and saving life on Earth.

In order to facilitate this consultation, a strategic partnership has been established between the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS), the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), and Tebtebba – Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the generous donation from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, which has contributed towards convening this meeting.

As partners, we jointly share a vision of indigenous and local communities not simply as victims but as active players in your own development – as partners in the struggle to save life on Earth.

I look forward to the outcome of your deliberations and I wish you every success in your endeavours.

Thank you for your attention.
