



STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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on the occasion of the

**FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY
MEASURES**

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Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

The scale of human activities such as international trade, tourism, civil and military transportation and aquaculture/mariculture are constantly increasing around the world. This contributes to invasions of alien species including plant pests, a phenomenon cumulatively considered to be a serious factor in the global loss of wild fauna and flora, as well as in the loss of agricultural and forestry production.

The cost that the world pays for the loss of biodiversity is estimated to be 1.4 trillion dollars globally, equal to five percent of the global gross domestic product. Moreover, this estimate increases when one takes into account the cost of the eradication of invasive alien species and mitigation of their impacts on agricultural species as well as endemic species. Clearly, the risks of invasive alien species are substantial.

In an effort to achieve the goals of the on-going work on invasive alien species, the IPPC and the CBD have been working together since the seventh Conference of the Parties to the CBD in 2004 to develop mechanisms to address the threats posed by invasive alien species. At COP 8 in 2006, the CBD was mandated to work in this critical area by consulting with relevant international bodies and instruments, such as the IPPC, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding whether and how to address the lack of international standards covering invasive alien species, in particular animals, that are not pests of plants under the IPPC.

To follow-up on this, the Secretariats of the IPPC and CBD met during the 13th meeting of the CBD's scientific body in 2008 to renew a joint programme of work in order to assist prevention, detection and eradication of invasive alien species at national, regional and global levels. I gratefully note that the Secretariat of the IPPC has provided us with access to their National Plant Protection Organisations, enabling the CBD to address the threats of IAS and to interact with as many experts as possible. Indeed, many of the CBD's efforts are dramatically strengthened by co-operation in the jointly-organized programme of work with the IPPC.

The on-going work on alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species was reviewed in-depth at the ninth meeting of the COP held last year in Bonn, Germany. The decision IX/4 invited the IPPC to continue efforts to expand, within its mandate, its actual coverage of invasive alien species that impact on biodiversity, including in aquatic environments.

In addition, an inter-agencies invasive alien species liaison group has been established to fill the gaps and inconsistencies of the international regulatory framework and to continue the collaboration. The liaison group closely links United Nations organizations with experts to facilitate the exchange of information.

I would also note that our cooperation with the IPPC extends beyond invasive alien species to include living modified organisms and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Parties to the Biosafety Protocol have called for further cooperation with IPPC and we look forward to strengthening our relationship in this area.

The world faces the threat of climate change. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration has increased 35% since pre-industrial times and continues to increase dramatically. Climate change will likely have complex effects on the invasive potential of plants and may entail a dramatic re-organization of the communities of flora and fauna in the forests. Climate change is therefore likely to affect range expansion and contraction of insects, including plant pests, and may trigger complex patterns in the spread of plant pests and other alien species. The collaboration between the IPPC, together with other organizations, and the CBD may continue to take the complex influence of climate change into consideration for its joint efforts to address the threats from invasive alien species.

We are less than 300 days from the 1st of January 2010. The 2010 Target of the CBD, “a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss”, has been a difficult challenge. The 2010 Target includes the goal of “controlling threats from invasive alien species” and this goal is, unfortunately, no exception to the challenge. In addition, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation under the CBD set in its target 10 to achieve; management plans in place for at least 100 major alien species that threaten plants, plant communities and associated habitats and ecosystems. To achieve or approach these goal and target by 2010, the spread of invasive alien species must be mitigated with the strong commitment of the international community. And yet, as global travel and trade expand, so does the threat of invasive alien species.

The United Nations proclaimed May 22 as The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. This year, in 2009, we will focus on the theme of invasive alien species. In preparation for the international celebration, the inter-agencies invasive alien species liaison group, mentioned earlier, has contributed to developing materials to increase public awareness on invasive alien species. I thank the Secretariat of the IPPC and other organizations for their efforts in the preparations of the materials, and I take this opportunity to further encourage the celebration of the upcoming International Day for Biological Diversity 2009 through the plant protection organizations and other organizations.

I look forward to the continued partnership between our two conventions and wish you a fruitful meeting.

Thank you for your attention.