



STATEMENT BY

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP “GUIDELINES ON PRACTICES FOR
SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN DRYLANDS OF
THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA”**

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Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to convey my greetings to the distinguished participants of this joint meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Agence Nationale de la Grande Muraille Verte. You have tasked yourselves with finalizing and validating the draft version of the Guidelines on Practices for Sustainable Forest Management in Drylands of the Sub-Saharan Africa. I would therefore like to briefly outline some links between your work and that of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and draw attention to the relevance of dryland ecosystems for all three Rio Conventions¹ and opportunities for collaboration on the topic.

As you are aware, the sustainable use of biodiversity is one of the three objectives of the CBD. To this effect, the Convention has developed the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, consisting of fourteen interdependent practical principles of general relevance to all sectors, and has included sustainable use concerns in all of its programmes of work.

The expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity, adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD in 2002, includes an objective to develop effective strategies with respect to the sustainable use of forest biodiversity. A good practice guide entitled “Sustainable Forest Management, Biodiversity, and Livelihoods” was released recently in collaboration with IUCN and is available on the CBD website. The Convention also released, in 2008 a cross-sectoral toolkit for the conservation and sustainable management of forest biodiversity. Within the framework of the programme of work on dry and sub-humid lands, adopted at the fifth meeting of the COP (decision V/23) in 2000, the CBD recently developed a toolkit available online entitled “Pastoralism, Biodiversity and Livelihoods”, a concrete product that demonstrates how biodiversity protection and sustainable land management are interlinked.

Indeed, biodiversity, desertification and climate change are interconnected, not only through climate change effects on biodiversity and desertification, but also through changes in biodiversity and land degradation that affect climate change. For instance, a recent review by FAO stresses that there is significant potential for mitigating climate change in drylands through carbon sequestration and storage soils. The Joint Liaison Group between the Secretariats of the UNCCD, the UNFCCC and the CBD was established with the aim of enhancing coordination between the three Conventions, including cooperation concerning the links between climate change, biodiversity and desertification. The Liaison Group recently published a brochure on the links between forests, climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation. There are a number of opportunities for win-win activities implemented in dry and sub-humid lands that address climate change while furthering the objectives of the CBD. For these reasons, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recognized, at their ninth meeting, the necessity of greater cooperation between the Rio Conventions and encouraged further collaboration.

The celebration of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity offers a unique opportunity to enhance this collaboration. Two events in particular stand out as moments when we must put the links between biodiversity loss, climate change, and desertification front and centre. The first is the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September, which for the first time ever will convene a high-level meeting on biodiversity with the participation of Heads of State and Governments. And the second is the CBD’s tenth Conference of the Parties in Nagoya in October, where we will finalize our post-2010 strategic plan and post-2010 biodiversity targets. Looking beyond 2010, I also hope that a joint Conference of the Parties of the three Conventions can be held towards 2012 – 20 years after the signature of the Rio Conventions, to symbolize the interdependence of the three Convention's objectives. Your work provides a concrete example for synergies between the Conventions, and the provisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, and I would like to encourage you to disseminate the lessons learned from this collaborative effort widely.

In this spirit, I wish you fruitful discussions, and I look forward to hearing about the results of your discussions.

Thank you for your kind attention.

¹ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)