



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

STATEMENT

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE THIRD AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER MEETING ON AN
INTERGOVERNMENTAL SCIENCE-POLICY PLATFORM ON
BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (IPBES)**

7 June 2010, Busan, Republic of Korea

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Life in harmony, into the future
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COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first join the other speakers in thanking the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting this important and perhaps pivotal meeting.

It is all the more timely given the launch last month in Nairobi of the third Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3). In the words of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, that famous son of this country, the message from this unique assessment of the status of biodiversity in 2010 is crystal clear: postponing action is no longer an option for mankind. The same goes for the initiative to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

I would have loved to be with you in Busan to attend in person and provide my full support to your third and final meeting, the mandate of which is “to decide on the establishment of a scientific mechanism that will address issues responding to the conservation and protection of biodiversity on Earth”. I deeply regret that a conflicting meeting convened by the Convention Secretariat in Montreal has prevented me from being here with you.

GBO-3 was launched simultaneously in all major United Nations centres. It was prepared on the basis of 120 national reports submitted by Parties. Many more national reports are expected in the coming weeks thanks to the generous financial support of the Government of Japan. The GBO highlights the strategic importance of mobilizing the scientific community at the local, national and international levels to meet the unprecedented challenge of continued biodiversity loss compounded by climate change and other direct pressures and underlying causes. The report will be before the Heads of State and Government attending the high-level General Assembly meeting on biodiversity to be held in New York on 22 September 2010.

The need to link the scientific community with policy-makers in support of the objectives of all biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements is ever more pressing. When Governments adopted the Convention on Biological Diversity, they realized that scientific information and knowledge was needed to plan and implement appropriate measures for the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem services. They also recognized that our knowledge of biodiversity was limited. Therefore, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) was established as a multidisciplinary organ open to all the Parties to the Convention and working under the authority and upon the request of the Conference of the Parties and with input from many other specialized organizations. Its mandate is to provide Parties with advice relating to the implementation of the Convention. This advice is based, *inter alia*, on scientific and technical assessments of the status and trends of biodiversity and of the threats posed to biodiversity and the impacts of measures taken. SBSTTA is also mandated to respond to scientific, technical, technological and methodological questions from the Parties.

The proposed intergovernmental platform would have an important part to play in enhancing the role of SBSTTA in promoting and facilitating the interface between the scientific community and the Parties to the Convention. Over the years, SBSTTA has developed seven programmes of work covering various biomes and has carried out a number of assessments, including, for example, an assessment of the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. SBSTTA has based its work mainly on the national reports submitted by Parties and other information provided in response to notification to Parties and other partners.

Following the recent fourteenth meeting of SBSTTA, which was held in Nairobi last

month, we remain convinced that, to be useful and to add value, IPBES will need to build on, support and complement the work of SBSTTA in its task of providing scientific and technical advice to policymakers for the implementation of the Convention. The work of such a mechanism will remain unfulfilled without the full participation of the Secretariat of the Convention, the storehouse of essential knowledge and information provided since 1996 by 193 Parties through their national reports. The Convention Secretariat has serviced nine meetings of the Conference of the Parties, 14 meetings of SBSTTA, and more than 50 meetings of scientific experts. It has prepared more than 500 documents for the meetings of these bodies in the past 10 years. All in all, the Convention Secretariat has made a singular contribution to promoting science at the service of the international community as a whole.

It is for this reason that the 6,000 participants attending the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bonn in May 2008, adopted decision IX/15. In that decision, they noted the need for improved scientific information in order to improve the role of SBSTTA and the scientific advisory bodies of other biodiversity-related conventions. They welcomed the establishment of your consultative process.

It is also for this reason that a message was addressed to your last meeting in October by the then President of the Conference of the Parties, Mr. Sigmar Gabriel, and the incoming President, Mr. Sakihito Ozawa-San. They mandated the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention to consider, at its third meeting, the outcomes of your meeting and its implications for the implementation and organization of work of the Convention, including its Strategic Plan, and to make recommendations for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting.

There is a well known Korean saying that “getting started is half the battle”. And the Korean Government, under the leadership of President Lee, has made that start and shown the world how to succeed in achieving a green economy. We should all learn from their enthusiasm and strong will in mainstreaming biodiversity into social and economic development policies.

But the best gift that you could give to the celebration of this International Year of Biodiversity would be the establishment of an IPBES this year. To recall the slogan for the International Year: *Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is our life.*

I wish you success in your work and, as always, pledge the full support of the Secretariat in the implementation of your decisions.

Thank you for your attention.
