



STATEMENT

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THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

AFRICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOP ON REDD-PLUS, INCLUDING ON RELEVANT
BIODIVERSITY SAFEGUARDS

Cape Town, 20-23 September 2011



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to convey my warm greetings to *everyone gathered* in Cape Town for the African regional consultation and capacity building workshop on REDD-plus, including on relevant biodiversity safeguards. I am very grateful to our host, the Government and people of South Africa, in particular the South African National Biodiversity Institute, for the excellent collaboration and their very effective preparation of the workshop. I would also like to thank the Governments of the United Kingdom and Norway, and the UN-REDD Programme, for their generous financial support.

We are meeting at a critical time when the world's forests are facing immense pressures. Our imminent challenge is nothing less than to reverse the trend of deforestation and forest degradation; restore intact forests world-wide; and thereby maintain the biodiversity of the world's forests for the well-being of present and future generations.

As you are aware, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth meetings, held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010 adopted a new strategic plan for biodiversity. The Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020 includes clear and measurable targets to achieve the objectives of the Convention in forests and other ecosystems. In this context, REDD-plus has been welcomed by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD as a mechanism that could also contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The four targets of the CBD Strategic Plan which are most relevant in the context of REDD-plus are:

Target 5: to halve, and where feasible bring close to zero, the rate deforestation, and to significantly reduce degradation and fragmentation by 2020;

Target 7: to manage all areas under forestry sustainably by 2020;

Target 11: to conserve at least 17 per cent of all terrestrial ecosystems by 2020;

and Target 15: to restore at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification by 2020.

COP 10 also invited Parties and other Governments to enhance the benefits for, and avoid negative impacts on biodiversity from REDD-plus, and other sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use activities (decision X/33). Applying appropriate safeguards will be essential to ensure the success of REDD-plus, both in terms of long-term stability of carbon storage, and in terms of achieving social and biodiversity benefits. In this context, COP 10 requested the Executive Secretary to provide advice, for approval by COP 11, on the application of relevant safeguards for biodiversity, so that actions on REDD-plus are consistent with the objectives of the CBD.

The decision further requests the Executive Secretary and to identify possible indicators to assess the contribution of REDD-plus to achieving the objectives of the Convention and assess potential mechanisms to monitor impacts on biodiversity from REDD-plus and other ecosystem-based approaches for climate change mitigation.

Pursuant to COP decision X/33, the objectives of this workshop are to:

- consult effectively with Parties on the development of advice on relevant REDD-plus safeguards identify possible indicators to assess the contribution of REDD-plus to achieving the objectives of the CBD
- assess potential mechanisms to monitor REDD-plus impacts on biodiversity
- enhance the coordination of capacity-building efforts on issues related to REDD-plus

The Secretariat will compile the views expressed in the workshop and present them to the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advise (SBSTTA) at its sixteenth meeting. Based on the views expressed, SBSTTA may then forward recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its eleventh meeting, to be held in India in October 2012.

We will also inform the UNFCCC Secretariat, the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advise (SBSTA), and the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties about the results of this workshop. In this context I am particularly pleased that several participants here are UNFCCC Focal Points who have joined their colleagues, the CBD National Focal Points, to attend this workshop together, and I am grateful to the UNFCCC Secretariat for participating in this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my hope that the workshop will take place in an informal, constructive and supportive atmosphere. REDD-plus requires new solutions for persistent problems, and we have to be open and willing to learn from each other, and from our own experiences, while we aim to achieve a well-designed, fully functional and well-implemented REDD-plus mechanism that provides benefits for forest biodiversity, and for indigenous and local communities.

The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity was a resounding success – it is now time to translate our achievements into an equally successful 2011 International Year of Forests, and use the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020 to jointly achieve the 2020 biodiversity targets.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you a very productive workshop.
