



**STATEMENT BY
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ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CBD
PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PROTECTED AREAS**

**BELGRADE, SERBIA
4 JUNE 2012**

**Excellency,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me immense pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you all to this Sub-Regional Workshop for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia on Capacity-building for Implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA).

It is heartwarming to see here participants from these two regions, representatives from indigenous and local communities, IUCN, as well as a number of NGOs and UN agencies. This august gathering validates the importance, which your countries and the organizations you represent accord to protected areas and to the CBD programme of work on protected areas. I thank the European Union for generously providing the necessary financial support for this workshop, and the Government of Serbia for so actively supporting this workshop.

The Palace of Serbia in the historical city of Belgrade on the Danube makes for a wonderful setting and I am confident it will provide the necessary impetus for our deliberations. This is the first time a CBD capacity building workshop on protected areas is being held for these two regions together and I extend my deepest gratitude to Ms. Snežana Prokić and to the Government of Serbia for their strong and active role in making this happen.

The origins of the legal protection of nature in Serbia are historical, dating from the fourteenth century. Today Serbia is host to a remarkable collection of protected sites, including heritage sites or areas of special geological, biological and environmental diversity such as the Golija-Studenica Biosphere Reserve – one of nine magnificent Ramsar sites. A “Day of Nature” established by the Law on the Protection of Nature in Serbia and recently celebrated on 11 April reminded the general public of the importance of protecting natural heritage. On that occasion State Secretary, Dr. Ivica Radovic, pointed to efforts under way to protect up to 20 percent of Serbian territory – an inspirational goal that reaches beyond the global Aichi Target 11.

According to the WDPA, across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia an average of 9.13 per cent of the terrestrial area of country Parties is protected, and an average of 6.81 per cent of territorial marine waters are protected. So there is some work to be done to protect the biodiversity of this vast area. In addition, we cannot rely upon simply declaring protected areas, as we remember the critically important qualitative aspects of target 11 – ecologically representative, effectively and equitably managed, including areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, and well-connected, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya in 2010 adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. As the elements of Aichi Target 11 incorporate the tenets of the PoWPA, further effective implementation of the PoWPA holds the key for achieving target 11. PoWPA implementation also contributes toward achieving targets 1, 2, 5, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 18. As countries chart their own courses towards achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, they will be looking for the most efficient and innovative solutions to meet both their social development needs and biodiversity conservation goals. This workshop aims to provide the necessary capacity to help countries in setting realistic and achievable national targets for the PoWPA and ways and means for achieving those targets including tools and resources and linkages to capacity building activities.

The establishment of comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively managed and financially secured protected area networks is a critical strategy not only for biodiversity conservation, but for securing ecosystem goods and services, enabling climate change adaptation and mitigation, helping countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals and a key investment in environmental

sustainability. An ecologically representative network of protected areas is the cornerstone of a national biodiversity strategy and action plan. Recognizing these critical roles of protected areas, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in February 2004 committed to a comprehensive and specific set of actions known as the Programme of Work on Protected Areas. By emphasizing the equitable sharing of costs and benefits, recognizing various governance types, and by giving prominence to ecological representation, management effectiveness and multiple benefits, the PoWPA is the most comprehensive global plan of action for effective implementation of protected areas and is considered as a defining framework or “blueprint” for protected areas planning for the next decades. CBD Parties hailed the PoWPA as the most implemented of CBD programmes and a successful initiative. I am pleased to inform you that the Secretariat is making sincere attempts to help countries in implementing PoWPA through initiatives such as organizing sub-regional capacity building workshops, providing a user friendly comprehensive website and making available e-learning modules on key themes of protected areas in five languages.

Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are half way into the year 2012. As you appreciate, 2012 is an important year in the history of sustainable development. The world community will gather again in Brazil at the end of this month to reflect what we have achieved toward sustainable development over the past two decades and to develop a roadmap for our future green-development, sustainable development, the only way to our sustainable future. In 2012, CBD is 20 years old. We need to build on achievements of the past two decades. 2012 is the second year of the Strategic Plan and the United Nations Decade for Biodiversity. After many flashes of media and awareness campaigns of 2010 and 2011, it is time to take real actions towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Time is running fast and we cannot spare any second or any minute, otherwise our goals and targets will slip away. In 2012, COP 11 will be held in India which will provide further guidance for implementing the Strategic Plan, particularly on resources needed. Rest assured that all you do will count, no matter whether your actions are big or small. Only collectively can we achieve our global goals and targets.

Let me take this moment to extend my wholehearted appreciation to our regional and global partners who are represented here as key partners who significantly contribute to the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas and who further reiterate their support by being with us here today. Thank you for participating and sharing your expertise with us. For gains to be made toward achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets it will require strategic partnerships between Parties, the Convention and our regional and global partners. We will work together in this spirit of collaboration.

This is therefore the context of the present workshop, which aims to provide practical, hands-on tools and training toward reaching these goals. I once again welcome you all and look forward to open discussions and concrete and practical outcomes.

Thank you.