



STATEMENT BY

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**SPECIAL EVENT CELEBRATING THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1992 EARTH
SUMMIT**

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Distinguished authorities, delegates and guests,

A film we will show at the end of this session, prepared by the climate change secretariat, synthesizes well the challenges that brought us together and continue to be our goal under each of the three Rio Conventions: to create a momentum for change; change for good.

Last month, the 193 Parties to Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a message to be delivered at Rio+20 on the foundational importance of biodiversity for sustainable development and calling for urgent and effective action to halt the ongoing loss of biodiversity.

Their message reminds governments of the opportunity that the Summit provides to reaffirm the commitment made in 1992 to achieving the three objectives of the Convention: the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

We have come a long way since the CBD was established twenty years ago. Much progress has been made in giving effect to the provisions of the Convention. Programmes of work have been developed to address the management of biodiversity in all the Earth's biomes. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans have been developed and are being implemented in the majority of countries. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was adopted and entered into force. And in 2010 the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing was adopted to give effect to the Convention's third objective.

Practical measures have been established on the ground. For example protected areas now cover over 13% of the Earth's terrestrial area. Understanding of the social, cultural and economic values of biodiversity has greatly improved. There is also growing recognition of its important role in achieving food-security; mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change; and in the prevention of, and resilience to, natural disasters and impacts of land degradation.

But despite this progress, biodiversity remains in a precarious state. If we are to safeguard it as the fundamental basis for sustainable development and growth of present and future generations, effective and urgent action is required more than ever.

To this end, in 2010, the 193 Parties to the CBD adopted an ambitious Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011 to 2020, including twenty global Biodiversity Targets – the Aichi Targets; and they agreed on activities and initiatives to mobilize resources for the implementation of the Convention.

Implementing the Strategic Plan and meeting its Aichi Targets are essential to conserve biodiversity and achieve sustainable development. For this purpose, mobilization of financial resources, from all sources, will need to increase substantially. The multiple values of biodiversity will need to be mainstreamed in national policies and measures and in private sector decision-making, across all sectors.

Now is the time for the international community to commit itself to a truly sustainable future. To this end we need to upscale and mainstream the sustainable practices of production and consumption.

Establishment of the CBD arose from recognition that the Earth's biological diversity, and the essential ecosystem services it provides, forms the basis of our health, our food security, our cultures, our wealth, and our well-being; and that its maintenance is central to the achievement of sustainable development. This recognition has never been as urgent as it is now. We cannot take nature for granted.

In reaffirming their commitments made at the Earth Summit, governments would help to build the foundations for a sustainable future, the future we want. Thank you.

