



STATEMENT

by

MR. BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS

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

on the occasion of the

**14TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (AMCEN)**

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Distinguished President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEM)

Honorable Ministers and African Government Representatives

Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) expresses its deep gratitude to the government of United Republic of Tanzania, and to the United Nations Environment Program, for organizing this meeting and for inviting the CBD to share its agenda on biodiversity at the 14th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN).

The Executive Secretary of the CBD, Mr. Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, would have wished to be present here himself but his prior engagements have denied him this golden opportunity.

It is 20 years since the adoption of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) as one of the three Rio conventions. The CBD has reached a matured age at which it has adopted two key Protocols on Biosafety and Access and Benefit Sharing and a Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Biosafety Protocol. In October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan, with your generous input into the negotiation process, the Parties to the Convention adopted an agreed global biodiversity agenda, with a balanced set of targets: the Aichi targets, as well as general agreed rules for the implementation of the objectives of the Convention: 1. Conservation of biological diversity; 2. Sustainable use of biological diversity; and 3. Fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

Currently all countries in Africa are among the 193 countries that are Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, with 49 of these countries also having ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Out of the 5 countries to date that have ratified the Nagoya Protocol of Access and Benefit Sharing, 3 are African countries.

However, as we move forward in our pursuit to achieve our balanced set of targets— the Aichi targets- by the year 2020, the trend of biodiversity loss continues unabated. This depicts a mismatch between commitments we made and the actual implementation we are achieving.

To reverse the current trend of biodiversity loss, the Executive Secretary of the CBD, has since his appointment in January this year, endorsed the enhanced implementation of the Convention and its Protocols.

In the implementation strategy, we need to adopt a pragmatic, multi-faceted approach which responds to the challenges posed by the trends of biodiversity loss and the opportunity offered by biodiversity, as a key part of the wealth of each country, toward achieving sustainable development.

We need to mainstream biodiversity into national development agenda. Biodiversity should not be perceived as a problem to be solved but rather as an opportunity to help achieve broader goals within the social and economic spheres of our lives.

We need to mobilize national financial and other resources for reversing the current trends. It is proposed that Parties to the Convention become very introspective and more strategic, going beyond needs identification to prioritizing approaches and mechanisms, emphasizing the leveraging of resources from existing sources through mainstreaming biodiversity in different sectors, incorporation of sustainability criteria in government procurements, review of economic instruments, further engagement of the business sector, etc.

We need to put in place a continuous monitoring system for the Aichi Targets to ensure that we remain on track in reversing the biodiversity loss.

Parties to the Convention need to increase their capacity to implement the CBD goals, programs and targets. This could be best achieved through more structured and continuous capacity development processes at sub-regional, regional and continental levels.

There is also the need to promote more effective scientific, technical and technological cooperation among Parties on technology transfer, which has been lacking so far.

We need to promote much stronger recognition and support to community-based approaches for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, thus increasing on one side the protected areas effort and on the other side promoting human well-being, food security and poverty alleviation.

We also need to expand the engagement of the business sector by enhancing the enabling environment through government policies and procurement rules and by outreach and guidance to small and medium sized enterprises.

Honourable Ministers and government representatives:

Indeed, Africa is enormously endowed with very rich biodiversity and Africa has always championed all negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. I therefore express my gratitude for the support Africa has provided during the negotiation process of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing, which led to the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (Nagoya Protocol) at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010. I thank AMCEN for assisting countries to develop and implement access and benefit-sharing measures to meet their obligations under the Protocol.

The Nagoya Protocol brings practical measures to achieve the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. It notably provides greater legal certainty for both providers and users of genetic resources. In addition, the Protocol's provisions related to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by indigenous and local communities will strengthen the ability of these communities to benefit from the use of their knowledge, innovations and practices.

In addition, by ensuring that providers of genetic resources obtain fair and equitable benefits, the Protocol will create incentives to conserve biological diversity and use it in a sustainable manner.

I also thank you for your support in the adoption of the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The efforts of AMCEN in building capacity of African countries to establish and implement biosafety coordination mechanisms and to the use the Biosafety Clearing-House are all fully appreciated.

Further, I welcome the proposed coordination mechanism for the African group of negotiators on biodiversity.

May I urge you as our leaders of the environment in Africa to push for an early ratification of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing at the national level so as to enable the international instrument come into force before COP 12 in 2014.

I further urge you to help establish or revise the national legislations and governance systems for access and benefit-sharing, as well as support the

ratification of the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, as a strategy to promote better use of genetic resources with equity and precaution.

Thank you very much and I wish you a very successful meeting