



OPENING REMARKS BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

to the

**AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON VALIDATING THE AFRICA REVIEW
REPORTS ON BIODIVERSITY, FORESTS, MOUNTAINS, BIOTECHNOLOGY AND
TOURISM**

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the establishment of the Convention on Biological Diversity twenty years ago, much progress has been made. Practical measures have been established on the ground and there is a growing recognition of the social, cultural and economic values of biodiversity, such as 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, including in Africa.

The Earth Summit Rio + 20 common vision of the “Future We Want” recognized that biodiversity plays a critical role in maintaining ecosystems that provide essential services, which are the foundation of human wellbeing and underpin our efforts to eradicate poverty.

Indeed, the loss biodiversity and associated ecosystem services undermines the resources on which many African livelihoods and economies are based. The conservation of biodiversity however does and can continue to contribute to African economies and to development, if utilised sustainably. African governments therefore need to encourage sustainability in their economies in order to protect their “green infrastructure” and underlying biodiversity in order to ensure the sustained provision of valuable ecosystem services as a critical condition for achieving sustainable livelihoods and general wellbeing of their citizens, for current and future generations.

In 2010, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as a blueprint for the global biodiversity agenda for the next decade. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity provides a framework for implementation of the CBD, for addressing the drivers and underlying causes of biodiversity loss, for the maintenance of biodiversity, the enhancement of benefits to all and for appropriate national, regional and international mechanisms. The Strategic Plan will be implemented primarily through activities at the national or sub-national level, with supporting action at the regional and global levels.

In producing the Africa Review Reports on Biodiversity, Forests, Mountains, Biotechnology and Tourism, the Economic Commission for Africa is showing great leadership and initiative to ensure the effective implementation of commitments adopted at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and reaffirmed at Rio+20, and of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is important to encourage Regional Economic Commissions, regional organisations and UN agencies to provide support and strengthen the capacity of African governments to implement those commitments.

I am pleased that the Secretariat of the Convention was given the opportunity to contribute to the Africa regional review report on biodiversity and I trust that the Expert Group Meeting will further provide valuable input to this report.

I wish you a successful meeting.

Thank you.