



STATEMENT BY

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

on the occasion of

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY SUPPORT
GROUP ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ISSUES**

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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I am very pleased to welcome the members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues to Montreal and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

I also want to extend a warm welcome in particular, to the Chief of the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Ms. Chandra Roy-Henriksen and to the Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Chief Edward John.

The Secretariat of the Convention has been a committed partner of the UNPFII since its inception more than a decade ago. This is because the Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes the important contribution that traditional knowledge can make in support of our efforts to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. This reality was reflected in the establishment, in 2000, and the continued existence to this day of the Open Ended Working Group on Article 8 (j) under the Convention. We are proud of the work accomplished thus far by the Working Group and of the strong participation of indigenous and local communities in its work over the years.

As part of its cooperation with the UNPFII and agencies, the Secretariat hosted the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group in 2007 and engaged in an in-depth dialogue with Forum members in 2010.

This year the Secretariat funded and facilitated, along with Tribal Link Inc. a capacity building workshop on the Convention and its Nagoya Protocol, for indigenous peoples who follow the work of the UNPFII, on the margins of the eleventh session, with a good deal of positive feedback and success.

The Secretariat also offered capacity building to all UNPFII members on the Convention and its Nagoya Protocol during 2012, and I am pleased to say this offer was taken up by two members, Mr Bertie Xavier and Mr Paul Kanyinke Sena, who participated, along with other indigenous peoples, in capacity building workshops in Paraguay and Burundi earlier this year.

Mr. Kanyinke Sena was also able to participate in COP 11, in Hyderabad in October, thanks to funding from the CBD Voluntary fund for Indigenous and Local Community participation in meetings held under the Convention.

These activities in support of the UNPFII were conducted thanks to the generosity of the Governments of Spain and Japan, who attach great importance to both the work of the Convention, and the effective participation of indigenous peoples in United Nations' processes.

In 2010, the Conference of the Parties adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources (and associated traditional knowledge), which, inter alia, recognizes the rights of indigenous and local communities with regard to their traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. At its recently held eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties noted that the Protocol provides a favourable framework for the development of *sui generis* systems and for access to and sharing benefits from the use of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.

Further to this, the programme of work for Article 8(j) is poised to develop further guidance to ensure that indigenous communities obtain fair and equitable share of benefits arising from the use of their knowledge and that access to such knowledge is based on their prior informed consent (task 7). More broadly, the Working Group on Article 8(j) will develop guidelines for legislation to implement Article 8(j) and its related provisions that recognize, safeguard and fully guarantee the rights of indigenous and local communities over their traditional knowledge within the context of the Convention (task 12). The Working Group will also develop standards and guidelines for the reporting and prevention of unlawful appropriation of traditional knowledge and related genetic resources (task 10).

The Working Group is collaborating with UNESCO to develop guidelines that would facilitate repatriation of information and knowledge, including associated cultural property, in order to facilitate the recovery of traditional knowledge relevant to biological diversity (task 15).

All of these activities will contribute to the achievement of Aichi Target 18 – that by 2020, the traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels. They will also enhance the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (Target 16).

Since undertaking my duties at the Secretariat nine months ago, I have worked tirelessly with my staff to usher in a new era of implementation for the Convention in order to achieve the 20 Aichi targets. This focus on implementation should be reflected in inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues. Together we can identify common goals, seek opportunities for increased collaboration, and identify ways and means to harmonize our work and maximize our limited resources. Together we can move from rhetoric to action and from policy to implementation.

This year's IASG meeting aims to be a practical dialogue between agencies, to encourage a collaborative approach to addressing recommendations arising from the UNPFII, as well as a planning exercise to encourage greater coordination and collaboration in areas of mutual interest, such as capacity building. The Conference of the Parties has adopted decision XI/14 requesting increased collaboration between UN agencies in delivering capacity building and this is very much supported by indigenous peoples.

Given the difficult funding environment we all face, I would like you to use this opportunity for IASG members to share ideas and experiences on how we might collaborate more closely, in the context of our various mandates, to use scarce resources as efficiently as possible for the benefit of indigenous communities. I would welcome very much, all participating agencies to reflect on this during this meeting, and to identify possible avenues for cooperation in the coming years.

In recognition of the role of indigenous communities as stewards of cultural and biological diversity, the Secretariat attaches great importance to both their capacity building and to their effective participation in our work. In the last three years, the Secretariat has advanced a capacity building strategy in the Latin American and Caribbean region with a focus on indigenous trainers and a "train the trainer" methodology. Based on the success of this model both Parties and indigenous peoples have requested that this model be extended to other regions. This will require increased inter-agency cooperation in both fund raising and planning and delivery, and in particular closer engagement with UNEP and the other Multi-Lateral Environmental Treaties, but there is a role for all agencies to play in this.

If we are to achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Targets, we must fully recognize and value indigenous peoples as custodians of biodiversity. For the Convention they are essential partners in saving life on Pachamama (Mother Earth).

I wish you every success in your endeavors during this meeting and look forward to the outcomes and conclusions as we actively seek ways and means to work closely together in pursuit of our common goals.

Thank you.