



**Statement by the
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

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ADVANCING STRATEGIC GOAL A OF THE AICHI TARGETS

On the occasion of the Conference on

ECOLOGY AND ECONOMY FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

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**Convention on
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Your Excellency Mr. Bard Veger Solhjeug, Minister of the Environment of Norway,

Your Excellency Mrs. Jayanthi Natajaran, Minister of the Environment and Forests of India, President of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties,

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a great pleasure for me to address you at this seventh Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity. I have had the opportunity to participate in some previous Trondheim Conferences and I know how useful they have been to country delegations and how influential they have been in helping to shape the agenda of the Convention. I would like to express my appreciation to Norway and to the City of Trondheim for their dedication to biodiversity and to the Convention. We are all grateful to you Minister Solhjeug and Mayor Ottervik for hosting us here once again this week. It is also a pleasure to see Peter Schei as well as Ivar Baste and Tone Solhaug. I'd like to thank you all for your vision and hard work in promoting these events.

We are also grateful to you, Minister Solhjeug for setting the scene for our work this week. I agree with your sense of urgency concerning the implementation of the Strategic Plan and I very much welcome your good news that Norway will soon ratify the Nagoya Protocol.

Let me also say how pleased we are to see our President of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention here at this Conference. Thank you Madame for your opening remarks and for reminding us of some of the successful outcomes we achieved together under your presidency in Hyderabad.

The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties held in Hyderabad demonstrated that we have momentum in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and we are now making progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. For example:

- We made progress in the strategy for resource mobilization by setting concrete targets in this area for the first time;
- We launched new activities on ecosystem restoration, backed up by the Hyderabad Call for Concerted Action;
- We made progress in describing ecologically and biologically significant marine areas, contributing to debates in the United Nations General Assembly on this issue;
- We set the scene for the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol. Now, we see good progress in this regard, having already reached on third of the ratifications or accessions needed for the Protocol to enter into force. We are hopeful to have the first COP-MOP in Korea;
- Finally, we began to map out more clearly how biodiversity contributes to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

This week we have the opportunity to build upon the achievements of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 provides a globally agreed framework for our work. I think we can all take heart from the fact that it has been supported by other biodiversity related conventions (Ramsar, CMS, CITES), in the Rio+20 Conference outcomes, and the United Nations General Assembly resolutions , as well as by many United Nations organizations such as UNDP, UNEP, FAO and other, IUCN and non-governmental organizations. As intended, it truly has become the overall framework for action on biodiversity.

But the 2020 deadline for achieving most of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets is only some seven years away. There is a lot to do in this short time.

Next year, during the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Pyeonchang, Republic of Korea, and in the months ahead of that meeting, we will have a mid-term review of the progress made. We will need to know if we are on track to meet the 2015 and 2020 targets, so that we can make any necessary adjustments in our actions. For this, we are counting on all countries to update their NBSAPs, with the establishment of national targets, and to adopt them as policy instruments together with strategies for resource mobilization in line with the decisions adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and to ensure that their fifth national reports are completed by 31 March 2014. We appreciate the support of UNDP, UNEP and the GEF in this regard.

I cannot overstate the importance of this review. We do not want to repeat our failure to meet the 2010 target.

In its design, the Strategic Plan responds to the failure to achieve the 2010 target. GBO-3 found that while we had implemented many actions under the Convention on Biological Diversity, overall progress was undermined by relentless pressure from unsustainable activities.

The new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 puts emphasis on addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. This is Goal A and the focus of this conference. We must upscale our actions, as Rebecca Grynspan has stressed. We cannot just continue to have nice pilot projects. Let us declare the end of the pilot phase and let us welcome the phase of biodiversity mainstreaming!

MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

We need to do a better job at mainstreaming biodiversity into development planning and implementation. I firmly believe that one of the best ways we can make progress is to identify and promote win-win approaches that also help solve the problems that societies and Governments struggle with.

I believe we have a relatively good understanding of how ecosystem goods and services contribute to other social, economic, and environmental sustainability goals, such as poverty eradication, food security, health, energy and livelihoods.

We need to translate this into clear messages that demonstrate how biodiversity, and its conservation, restoration and sustainable use can deliver solutions to people's needs, how biodiversity can contribute to health, food and water security, and tackle climate change and its consequences.

We should not just emphasize the problem of biodiversity, but how biodiversity can contribute, as a solution, to sustainable development.

For example, this year's theme for the International Day for Biodiversity has focused on how biodiversity and ecosystem services contribute to water security. In our outreach materials for this special day, which we celebrated last week, we shifted the discussion from looking at biodiversity as the victim of water use to looking at biodiversity as a solution to meeting water challenges.

We are now working with FAO and WHO to promote better understanding of how biodiversity contributes to food security and health.

We are seeing increased recognition of the role of biodiversity. In his remarks this morning, Minister Solhjeug highlighted the importance of bumblebees. Over the last few months in Europe we have seen increased recognition of the essential role of bees and other pollinators for agricultural production resulting in the banning of some pesticides suspected of causing pollinator decline through the application of the precautionary approach.

I believe that, in the area of ecosystem restoration, we have major opportunities especially if we can join forces with the agricultural, forest, water and energy sectors to promote social goals through integrated approaches across landscapes and seascapes. We should strive for resilient landscapes and seascapes.

Indeed, we are already seeing major progress towards the Bonn Challenge of restoring 150 million hectares, as well as a range of other efforts:

- Just as happened in the past in the north-eastern United States of America and parts of Europe, we are seeing an increase in land being restored as agriculture retreats from areas where it is unprofitable. In my own country, Brazil, for example, this is happening in the Atlantic rainforest and even in the Amazon, one fifth of the land surface deforested in recent decades is currently in various stages of regeneration. Moreover, the revised forest code requires further forest restoration across the country.
- We see major forest landscape restoration efforts in the Republic of Korea, and in China, where reforestation schemes are being used on a massive scale to combat land erosion.
- Across the African Sahel, the Great Green Wall is being promoted to arrest desertification;
- In Haiti, forest restoration is being promoted by the Government to reduce land degradation as part of its anti-poverty agenda.

The Hyderabad Call for action on biodiversity provides further impetus. Depending on how it is done, ecosystem restoration can be relatively cheap. In a world with ever-increasing demands for food, bioenergy, hydropower and carbon sequestration, as well as biodiversity conservation, it simply doesn't make sense to leave land degraded.

We also need to explore how we can reach out to broader constituencies and mobilize their support for biodiversity:

- South Africa has already shown the way with its inspiring Working for Water scheme.
- Let us also take up the challenge highlighted by Prime Minister Singh in his address to COP-11 to mobilize the resources of India's employment to guarantee scheme for green jobs.
- Let us leverage the buying power of Governments through procurement schemes to promote biodiversity-friendly products.

- Let us promote vigorous win-win solutions for both the agricultural and environmental sectors by promoting restoration and on-farm conservation of genetic resources

VALUING BIODIVERSITY

Beyond sectoral approaches, we are also seeing progress in reflecting biodiversity into national planning and accounting processes in line with Aichi Target 2. In this regard, we need to consider all the values of biodiversity.

The consideration of the economic values of biodiversity is essential to correct the market failure to consider the full cost of products and processes and to correctly assess the merits of different development policies, programmes and projects, including economic incentives.

At the same time, the consideration of economic values should not be seen or used as an excuse to disregard the intrinsic and non-monetary values of biodiversity.

As our Bolivian colleagues have been reminding us in recent meetings, this is not about selling biodiversity, or commodifying nature. It is about reflecting the full range of biodiversity values in our decision-making.

There is substantial progress to report in this regard:

- National ecosystem assessments or TEEB studies are being conducted in many countries, including Armenia, Brazil, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom;
- We are developing better tools to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into economic decision-making including at the level of national accounting, for example through the United Nations System of Environmental and Economic Accounting. New guidelines have been recently released to facilitate this;
- There is a significant move to look beyond simplistic measures such as “GDP” to better measure human development. For example,
 - Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) is a global partnership led by the World Bank that aims to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the national accounts used to measure and plan for economic growth include the value of natural resources;
 - The UNEP/ UNU Integrated Wealth Report (2012) provides us with a good summary of better ways of assessing and monitoring human development.

We shall hear more about these efforts in this conference. Beyond accounting, the current discussion on “the future we want” represents a significant step forward from the more fragmented approach adopted for the Millennium Development Goals.

REDIRECTING RESOURCES

We are all aware of the importance of economic incentives and subsidies (which are dealt with in Target 3). Let me remind us of some figures:

- Over \$30 billion a year in fisheries, of which at least 20 billion lead to overcapacity and overfishing;
- Nearly \$70 billion a year of water subsidies, out of which 50 billion lead to over-use or waste of water in agriculture or industries;
- Over \$260 billion every year in agricultural subsidies in the OECD countries;
- And \$500 billion a year in energy subsidies, much of which accentuate the climate change problem;

Many of these not only have negative consequences for biodiversity but are socially inequitable – and many currently make no economic sense. We know that subsidies providing additional incentives to produce or consume often have harmful effects on biodiversity. We also know that some subsidy programmes do not even meet their proclaimed social objectives anymore. Programmes where both conditions apply constitute prime candidates for removal or reform.

There are encouraging signs of change, including examples of government-driven assessments with a view to identify priority candidates for reform or removal, as well as case of successful reforms.

But even with subsidies there are some signs of change, for example:

- Here in Norway, we have a successful example of reform of fisheries subsidies;
- When Ghana removed fuel subsidies, it coupled this with mitigation measures in order to counter adverse social effects, such as the abolishment of school fees;
- Fertilizer use in India, particularly over-use of urea, has a long history of encouraging land degradation and water pollution. Recent reform of fertilizer subsidies in India encourages fertilizer firms to offer a range of products that better reflect costs of production. The Government saves significant expenditure that can be invested elsewhere. In the longer-term farm productivity should increase as soils begin to recover. In this example we can see that innovative approaches are available to align the needs of farmers, government budgets and biodiversity.

These examples show that subsidy reform can be good for biodiversity, good for people and release funds to support biodiversity conservation and other social objectives. Of course, there are opportunities to achieve much more, especially in times of financial and economic crisis where the continued public expenditure on subsidies with perverse social and environmental impacts makes even less sense.

The experience with subsidies illustrates two important points for our conference this week:

- First - progress is being made – and we therefore have the opportunity to build on this progress by identifying how it was achieved and by transferring that knowledge to other areas;
- Second - the persistence of many perverse and distorted subsidies, and their magnitude, indicates the size of the challenge we face and that we have to do more than just identify the *economic* arguments for change – we need a clearer strategy for influencing policies.

In this connection, I am pleased to note that we do have ongoing work on addressing obstacles encountered in implementing options identified for eliminating, phasing out or reforming incentives

that are harmful for biodiversity. It is my hope that the experiences of CBD Parties in this regard will provide useful information for the development of modalities and milestones for Target 3, so that we can make substantial progress on this matter at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

The primary underlying causes of much of the biodiversity loss are due, one way or another, to human behaviour. Goal A is therefore largely about influencing behavioural change, especially through Targets 1 and 4.

Since the Convention on Biological Diversity was originally formulated there has been significant advances in the natural sciences, and to a lesser extent in social science, especially economics. But our attention to the social and political landscapes, within which the Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets are set, is lagging far behind. We need much better understanding of how political, policy and management decisions are made. What are the key interests and motivations of policy makers? What strategies, therefore, do we need to adopt to achieve Goal A?

In the end, it is clear that managing biodiversity is about people. It is about the ways in which they claim, use, and value natural resources. How people claim, use, and value those natural resources is manifested in their individual statements and value articulations, in the institutions they create, and in their behaviour as individuals, collectives and organizations.

Recognizing that biodiversity is not just about numbers and kinds of species — and has different relevance and meaning for different sectors of society — the socioeconomic considerations provide the backbone of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is clear that better engagement of social scientists and the different stakeholder groups is required not only to achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, but in particular to ensure its incorporation into the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

With the support of Norway, the Secretariat commissioned a background paper for this conference on the role of social sciences in support of the Strategic Plan. We look forward to rich discussions on this topic this week and in the coming months.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet at a time when the United Nations General Assembly is developing the post-2015 development agenda. The current discussion of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda has recognized that we need to achieve results simultaneously for different and often competing agendas such as those on food, water and energy security, poverty eradication, health and environment and biodiversity.

As will be reflected in the theme of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, *Biodiversity is for sustainable development*. One challenge is to strengthen the incentives for other stakeholder groups to take on board the benefits of biodiversity. Another challenge is to promote an *integrated* set of SDGs that promote implementation not in silos – as the MDGs have tended to do – but which fully explore cost-effective, socially desirable and environmentally sustainable solutions.

The positive developments that I have outlined indicate that there is room for optimism and that the doors are opening for better reflection of biodiversity in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

The Secretariat has been devoting considerable efforts to contributing to various ongoing discussions. I assure you that our efforts will continue. Our agenda is to help to get biodiversity reflected across all relevant aspects of the discussions. After all – this is the objective of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Goal A and Aichi Biodiversity Targets 1 to 4.

I am sure we will all agree that we can no longer have a development framework that enables biodiversity to be side-lined as being somehow a different, and competing, subject to core sustainable development interests.

I look forward very much to our discussion this week and its contribution to improving the effectiveness of our collective efforts in these regards.

Thank you