



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS
on the occasion of
World Environment Day
5 June 2013**

The theme for this year's World Environment Day celebrations is "Think.Eat.Save." This theme provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon the connection between our daily actions in the kitchen and at the table, and the bigger context of sustainable development and protecting biodiversity.

In the next decades, the global population is projected to rise from 7 to 9 billion people. As a result we are going to need to produce between 40 and 60% more food to ensure that these additional 2 billion people will not go hungry. How will we do this without further degrading the ecosystems of our planet? A substantial part of the answer lies in reducing food waste.

Global food production has been estimated to be of the order of 4 billion metric tonnes per year. However we know that as much as a third of global food production is either wasted or lost before it ever reaches a human stomach. The causes of this loss vary. In some countries the lack of infrastructure means that food cannot be shipped to markets before it spoils or cannot be stored for extended periods. In other areas the excessive production or over consumption of food results in large amounts of food being wasted by consumers. Regardless of the underlying reason, wasted food means that the resources – genetic resources, water, fertilizer, and energy – used in the production of all that food are also wasted.

By some estimates, global food production occupies 25% of all habitable land and is responsible for 70% of fresh water consumption, 80% of deforestation, and 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. Agricultural production is the largest single driver of biodiversity loss and land-use change. Further global food losses are so large that some estimates suggest that almost one quarter of the genetic resources, water, cropland and fertiliser used in agricultural production are used to produce food that will ultimately be wasted.

Reducing food waste not only makes economic sense but is also a concrete way of contributing to sustainable development and helping to conserve biodiversity. Simple actions can be taken now, by actors at all levels, to help resolve the problem of food waste. Doing so will greatly increase our ability to feed the Earth's growing population without expanding production. Reducing food waste would also help bring the world community close to fulfilling the international commitments made in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada
Tel : +1 514 288 2220 Fax : +1 514 288 6588
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



First, reducing food waste will help us to address some of the direct causes of biodiversity loss. In Aichi Biodiversity Target 5, the world community has committed to reducing the rate of habitat loss by at least half, and where feasible, bringing it close to zero by 2020. By making more efficient use of the food we are already producing, there would be less pressure to convert natural habitats into areas for agriculture. For similar reasons, the greater awareness of the impact of food waste, and our eating habits in general, can help us achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets 6 and 7 which relate to the sustainable management and harvesting of fish and the promotion of sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry practices. Likewise the reduction of food waste also has the potential to help reduce pollution by reducing the amount of fertilizer, a globally important source of excessive nutrients, that needs to be used in food production. As such, tackling food waste can be seen as a clear contribution to achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 8.

Greater awareness of and efforts to address food waste would also help us to reach a number of other Aichi Biodiversity Targets including Targets 1 and 10. An informed and active citizenry that demands a reduction in waste not only at the table, but also during production, will be part of the movement of support for sustainable production practices, to which commitment has been made through Target 4 – that by 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

From today, and into the future, when you work to reduce the food that is wasted, each action contributes to building a future of life in harmony with nature, the world we want.
