



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS
on the occasion of
WORLD FOOD DAY
16 October 2013**

“Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition”

Good nutrition depends on healthy diets. And healthy diets require variety and moderation, such as a variety of vegetables and grains, and adequate protein; be it from animal or plant sources. The common denominator to a healthy diet is biological diversity. Biodiversity provides the foundation for human health and is vital to food security. With the world population expected to reach nine billion by 2050, conserving biodiversity, and sustainably using the components of biodiversity, is critical for our well-being and the drive to end hunger and malnutrition.

Biodiversity forms the basis for a varied and healthy diet. It is through eating products from a variety of plants that people can obtain the full range of micronutrients and other essentials necessary for human survival. The genetic diversity of crops and livestock underpins a diverse and nutritious diet, as well as being a resource to enable food systems to evolve and adapt to changing conditions. A diverse diet is based on diverse farming systems which increase economic resilience and equity in farming.

This year’s World Food Day is being celebrated under the theme *Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition*. Apart from comprising food itself, biodiversity includes the ecosystems that provide the services that play a critical role in supporting sustainable and resilient food productivity. Healthy soils sustain water and nutrient availability for crops, while pollinators enable many plants to produce seeds and fruits as foods.

These and other ecosystem services lie at the heart of solutions for the sustainable intensification of production systems that provide for the livelihoods of producers. Farming systems also draw considerably on traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities, some of which has been used for centuries, if not millennia.

Healthy food systems are made possible by appropriate policies, incentives and governance. Inappropriate subsidies and perverse incentives can unbalance the production and consumption of food, leading to agricultural practices that degrade the soil, water and environment, and distort consumption patterns and trade. Such imbalances need to be corrected at the national level, using policies and tools appropriate to national conditions. Agricultural policies and investments need to emphasize rehabilitating and assuring the ecological foundation of agriculture as a means to improve productivity and economic efficiencies,



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whilst simultaneously reducing the impacts of food production on the environment and increasing the resilience of production landscapes to buffer the impacts of extreme climate events such as droughts and floods.

Recent initiatives adopted by governments under the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity on soil biodiversity, pollinators, and biodiversity for food and nutrition, address three key areas where biodiversity can be a solution for sustainable production and food and nutrition security.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets represent an international framework for designing nationally appropriate policies and targets, and implementing measures to achieve them, in order to address the issues and promote sustainability at national and local levels. All of the Aichi Targets are relevant but some directly address key issues related to food security:

- Target 3 aims for the elimination or phasing out of harmful subsidies
- Target 4 aims to achieve sustainable production and consumption
- Target 6 aims to ensure that all fisheries are managed and harvested sustainably
- Target 7 seeks to ensure that production landscapes (agriculture, aquaculture and forestry) are managed sustainably
- Target 13 seeks to maintain the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed domesticated animals
- Target 18 aims to integrate and recognise the importance of traditional knowledge and practices related to the conservation of biodiversity.

Sustainable food systems provide adequate and nutritious diets for all people, while maintaining the capacity of future generations to feed themselves, through optimal use of resources, including seeds, land, water, nutrients and pest control. On this day I would like to emphasize the key role of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Convention on Biological Diversity in our efforts to assure sustainable food systems, food security and healthy diets - each of which rely on biodiversity.
