



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS
on the occasion of
WORLD WILDLIFE DAY
3 March 2014**

“Celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora”

World Wildlife Day provides occasion to celebrate the wonder and beauty of the world's wild fauna and flora and to reflect on the multitude of benefits provided by wildlife. During this United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, this day reminds us that it is important to resolve to do our utmost to preserve these key components of biodiversity.

Wildlife has the power to bring joy and amaze us. Be they iconic species, such as lions and tigers, or the gelatinous blobfish, recently voted the world's ugliest endangered species, they are all wonders of nature. Among many cultures, entire habitats or sets of species within a landscape have special spiritual and existence value.

Wild fauna and flora provide benefit to people on many levels – including economic, medical and scientific, recreational and ecological – and play a crucial role in the ecological and biological processes essential to life itself, supporting healthy, resilient and productive ecosystems.

Ecosystem processes are driven by the combined activities of many species. Plant regeneration, food webs, and plant diversity are amongst the various processes that depend on the presence of fauna.

Therefore activities, such as hunting conducted in an unsustainable manner, have the potential to not only impact targeted species but the ecosystem more broadly. Extractive activities in forests and other natural ecosystems can be disruptive processes, and can alter the overall function, structure and composition of ecosystems, seriously affecting broader development objectives.

Wildlife is vital to many of the world's poorest people. Local animals provide meat protein, local trees provide fuel, and both plants and animals provide components of traditional medicines used by most people in the world. The depletion of wildlife is thus intimately linked to the food security and livelihood of inhabitants of ecosystems around the world as many people have few alternative sources of protein and income.

The benefits from natural wildlife resources and the financial assets obtained locally from these need to be better managed, through mechanisms that enable good governance so that the benefits are sustainable and safeguarded for future generations. There is an urgent need to stop wildlife crime, notably the illegal wildlife trade and poaching which have wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts.



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Implementing nationally and internationally agreed biodiversity strategies and targets and other relevant commitments, for example, are helping countries develop frameworks to effectively manage their natural wildlife resources.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has an important role in addressing wildlife issues – identifying, for instance, unsustainable hunting of bushmeat and its effect on non-target species as a priority for Parties – and is seeking to heighten awareness on the multiple dimensions of sustainable wildlife management, including through the Collaborative Partnership on Wildlife Management.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets, has been adopted as a universally agreed global framework to conserve, restore and sustainably use biodiversity and enhance its benefits for people. Wildlife conservation is at the heart of this Plan, which includes in its mission to, “take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity”. Aichi Biodiversity Target 12, for example, aims to prevent the extinction of threatened species by 2020 and improve the conservation status of those species most in decline.

The sheer breadth and scale of the benefits that wildlife provides is a compelling reason for maintaining wildlife populations and habitats in a productive and healthy state. We have a stronger economy, diverse food products and advancements in medical research all as a result of wildlife and natural ecosystems. It is imperative for ourselves and for future generations that we all take an active interest in their preservation.
