



STATEMENT BY
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ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA
ON ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION TO SUPPORT
ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS**

LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am happy to extend a warm welcome to you all to this capacity-building workshop for Southern and Eastern Africa on ecosystem conservation and restoration. It is a true pleasure for the CBD Secretariat to be able to organize this workshop in the beautiful country of Zambia which lies at the heart of the Miombo Ecoregion; a region that has been listed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as one of the Global 200 ecoregions, the largest of twenty one on mainland sub-Saharan Africa. Eleven countries across Southern Africa, covering over 3.6 million square kilometers, comprise these dry and moist woodlands that house some of the most important large mammal populations left in Africa and in the world. African elephant, black rhinoceros, cheetah, slender-nosed crocodile, among others, are some of the threatened species that can be found in this ecoregion. However, there are many threats to biodiversity in Sub-Saharan Africa. As the region has one of the world's fastest growing populations, land use and land cover change, mainly through conversion of natural ecosystems, particularly forests and grasslands, to agricultural land and urban areas, represent one of the major drivers to biodiversity loss in the region. Action is required to conserve the global treasure of biodiversity both at national and regional level. We therefore convene this workshop here with a spirit of hope. We aim to learn from the experience from all the countries of the region on how we can best conserve and restore biodiversity against all odds, and achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

As you know, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets, was adopted by the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya, Japan in 2010. Parties to the Convention have been translating these targets into national targets as part of their updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. At this workshop we will focus on three of the quantitative area-based targets Aichi Targets to: halve the rate of loss of natural habitats (target 5); to protect at least 17 per cent of terrestrial areas and inland waters and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas as part of improved protected area networks with connectivity across the landscape (Target 11) and to restore at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems (Target 15). There is a need for a coherent approach to these targets, and actions taken to achieve them contribute to the achievement of many other targets. Making progress in these areas clearly requires an intersectoral approach with the full participation of the agriculture and forest sectors, as well as local communities and the private sector and governmental authorities.

It is therefore heartwarming to have here experts from the countries of this region, from both the environmental sector and the forestry and agriculture sectors. We also welcome representatives from the Republic of Korea, as incoming presidency of the Conference of the Parties, and representatives of indigenous and local communities. We are also fortunate to have experts from FAO, UNEP, UNDP, UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, WRI, and many inter- and non-governmental organizations and academia. I hope that this mixture of experience fosters a fruitful exchange of views and coordination among sectors.

I would like to thank the Government of Japan through its Japan Biodiversity Fund, and FAO for generously providing the necessary financial support for this workshop. I would like to give special thanks to the Government of Zambia for actively supporting this workshop as our kind host, and to the many experts here who will share their experience with us this week.

There is certainly a global momentum building for ecosystem restoration. *The Bonn Challenge*, a global movement to restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2020, has already accumulated nearly 50 million hectares in pledges for restoration. Building on this, the *Hyderabad Call for a Concerted Effort on Ecosystem Restoration* in October 2012 led by the Governments of India, the Republic of Korea and South Africa as well as by the heads of many international conventions and

organizations, called for coordinated long-term efforts to mobilize resources and facilitate ecosystem restoration activities for the benefit of all.

Regionally, I would like to make special reference to South Africa's Working for Water programme which aims to improve ecological integrity, enhance water security, restore the productive potential of land, promote sustainable use of natural resources and invest in the most marginalized sectors of South African society. This programme is globally recognized as one of the most outstanding conservation initiatives on the continent. Furthermore, Zimbabwe with its Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) initiative integrates community based natural resource management into conservation efforts of the country. These projects serve as great examples of how leveraging public programmes with socio-economic and development objectives support conservation and restoration of ecosystems.

I would also like to mention the forest landscape restoration initiative in the Shinyanga region of Tanzania. The Shinyanga Soil Conservation Programme (HASHI) constitutes an excellent initiative that aims to restore the severely degraded woodlands in the region while providing local villagers access to important natural resources and giving them the responsibility for restoration. We must learn from their experience.

As countries chart their own courses towards achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, they will be looking for the most efficient and innovative solutions to meet both their social development needs and biodiversity conservation goals. This workshop aims to provide the necessary capacity to help countries in setting realistic and achievable yet ambitious national targets and ways and means for achieving those targets including tools and resources and linkages to capacity building activities.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are approaching the CBD COP 12 in October this year which will be hosted by the Republic of Korea. COP-12 will undertake a mid-term review of progress towards the achievement of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, to identify where we are in the implementation of the biodiversity agenda, and make course corrections as necessary. It is time to take real actions towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. We cannot spare any time, particularly where the results of actions take time to manifest themselves. Allow me to remind you of the commitment made by many African countries under the Gaborone Declaration at the Summit for Sustainability in Africa in May 2012, which reaffirmed the pledge from governments, private sector, civil society and community leaders to sustainable development that would ensure economic, social and environmental security of current and future generations.

Let me take this moment to extend my wholehearted appreciation to our national, regional and global partners who significantly contribute to conservation and restoration work on the ground and who further reiterate their support by being with us here today. Thank you for participating and sharing your expertise with us. For gains to be made toward achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, it will require strategic partnerships between the countries, the Secretariat, and our regional and global partners. We will work together in this spirit of collaboration.

I look forward to open discussions and concrete and practical outcomes from this workshop.

Thank you.

