



STATEMENT BY

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

Sub-regional Capacity-building Workshop on the Nagoya Protocol for the Caribbean

Georgetown, Guyana, 19 May – 22 May 2014



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Hon. Robert Persaud, Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment of Guyana
Mrs. Myrna Bernard, Director of Human Development at the CARICOM Secretariat
Distinguished Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Caribbean sub-regional Capacity-building workshop on the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing. Your participation in the workshop is a demonstration of the importance that you and your respective Governments and communities attach to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit-sharing.

On behalf of the CBD Secretariat, I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan and the European Union for providing the financial support that has enabled us to organise this workshop. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat and the Government of Guyana for graciously offering to host the workshop in this beautiful city of Georgetown.

We are also honoured to have you with us this morning, Hon. Robert Persaud, Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment of Guyana. Your decision to come and personally open this workshop is a clear testament to your strong commitment and that of your Government to the work of the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol. Indeed, this commitment is reflected not only in the fact that Guyana was the first country in the Caribbean to accede to the Nagoya Protocol on 22nd April this year but also in the fact that Guyana is one of the few countries in the world that already have in place a national policy on access and benefit-sharing. Thus, Guyana provides a perfect setting for our work this week. I believe that we will be inspired by the progress made by the Government of Guyana on the issue of access and benefit-sharing and learn from your experience.

I would also like to draw your kind attention to the fact that this workshop is being held during the same week as we mark the International Day for Biological Diversity (IBD) which is celebrated on 22 May every year. This year's theme of the IBD is "Island Biological Diversity". Thus the organization of the workshop this week also contributes to celebrating the IBD in a befitting manner.

Distinguished Participants:

The Nagoya Protocol provides a transparent international legal framework to advance the implementation of the Convention's third objective: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Protocol will create greater legal certainty, clarity and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge by establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources and for ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. By strengthening the opportunities for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use, the Protocol will also create incentives to conserve biological diversity, sustainably use its components, and further enhance the contribution of biological diversity to sustainable development and human well-being in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the envisaged post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As you may all be aware, we are currently in the homestretch towards the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol, just over 140 days until the beginning of the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held on 6 - 17 October 2014 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea.

The Protocol will enter into force on the 90th day after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession by Parties to the CBD. I am pleased to inform you that to date, 35 countries and the EU have deposited their instruments of ratification or accession, the latest being the European Union which deposited its instrument of approval last Friday on 16 May 2014.

The momentum is on to bring the Protocol into force soon. We are informed that a number of countries, including the Dominican Republic and others from this sub-region, are finalizing their national processes towards ratification or accession. We are thus quite optimistic, especially following EU's approval, that the Protocol will receive the remaining 15 ratifications or accessions by 7 July 2014 to reach the required 50 instruments for the Protocol to enter into force in time to hold the first meeting of the governing body of the Protocol (i.e. the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol or COP-MOP 1) concurrently with the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD.

I therefore take this opportunity to urge all countries in this sub-region that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Protocol before 7th July so that they can join Guyana and others to participate in the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in October 2014 as full Parties. This will enable you to play an important role in influencing the first decisions that will shape the future implementation of the Protocol. Please use the opportunity provided by this workshop to develop concrete road maps and action plans towards the ratification and implementation of the Protocol.

Distinguished Participants:

At the time the Nagoya Protocol was adopted in October 2010, the Conference of the Parties to the CBD also adopted a forward-looking Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets and called upon Parties to revise their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) taking into account the new Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Among these, Aichi Target 16 states that: "By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation."

While we are on track towards achieving the first part of Aichi Target 16, i.e. having the Protocol in force by 2015, we have further work to do to ensure that the Protocol will be "operational, consistent with national legislation" by 2015. A conservative interpretation of the second part of the Aichi Target implies that at the minimum, Parties to the Protocol would have in place domestic legislative, administrative or policy measures and institutional arrangements by 2015 to ensure that the Protocol is operational.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The year 2015 is just around the corner. As you work towards ratifying or acceding to the Protocol, I urge those of you that have not yet done so to concurrently embark on the national processes towards putting in place domestic legislative, administrative or policy measures and institutional structures to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol and to achieve the first Aichi Target.

As most of you are also currently in the process of updating or revising your NBSAPs and fine tuning your national biodiversity targets, I also urge you to ensure that ABS issues and measures are appropriately integrated in the revised NBSAPs in order to effectively achieve the third objective of the Convention. As you are aware, an NBSAP is the principal policy instrument for implementing the Convention and its Protocols at the national level which will guide future national budgeting and GEF national allocations for biodiversity as well as priorities for overseas development cooperation in the area of biodiversity. It is therefore important that the measures to implement the Nagoya Protocol are integrated into the NBSAPs and in the associated national resource mobilization plans.

Distinguished Participants:

The objective of this workshop is to promote further understanding of the Protocol's requirements and to strengthen your capacity to ratify/accede to the Protocol and prepare for its effective implementation with the view to contributing to the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 16. The workshop will also provide you with the opportunity to share relevant information and experiences and plan for the next steps towards ratification and implementation of the Protocol. You will also be introduced to the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing House and take part in hands-on training on how to use it to find and retrieve information and how to register and manage records in the central portal. This is crucial because when the Protocol enters into force Parties will be expected to use the ABS Clearing-House to fulfill some of the obligations. Thus a fully functional ABS Clearing-House is a vital component for the effective implementation of the Protocol and the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 16.

Ladies and gentlemen:

As we embark on a busy week of learning and sharing, I sincerely hope that you find the workshop beneficial to your work and that through the various presentations, group discussions and the hands-on training you will gain new knowledge and greater insight into the importance of ratifying and implementing the Nagoya Protocol. As stated by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, in his letter sent last April to all Heads of States and as noted by the UN General Assembly, in its resolutions A/RES/67/212 and A/RES/68/214, the Nagoya Protocol has a great potential to make valuable contributions to sustainable development, poverty eradication and further conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Before I conclude, I would like to express once again our sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan and the European Union for providing the financial support for the workshop and to the Government of Guyana and the CARICOM Secretariat for hosting the workshop. In particular, allow me to recognize the tremendous contribution made by Dr Therese Yarde and Ms. Shunae Samuels of the CARICOM Secretariat in organizing the logistics for the workshop. Last but not least, allow me to thank you, Honourable Minister, for taking time off your busy schedule to come and grace the opening of this workshop.

I wish you all very fruitful deliberations and look forward to concrete outcomes and clear practical steps on the way forward.

Thank you for your kind attention!