



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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE SUB-REGIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE NAGOYA
PROTOCOL ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING FOR WEST ASIA AND NORTH
AFRICA**

1 - 5 JUNE 2014 - DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Excellency,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to send my welcome to you all to this Sub-regional Capacity-building Workshop on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing for West Asia and North Africa.

It is uplifting to see participants from these two regions, UNEP, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee; the varied group of individuals present here today represents the spirit of collaboration which makes the achievement of our shared goals possible. I am honoured to have the CBD Secretariat share this room with a group of individuals who hold such a wealth of knowledge and I am convinced that with combined encouragement, efforts and enthusiasm, we have the ability to advance our shared goals of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity 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 organize this workshop. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for amiably offering to host the workshop in the innovative city of Dubai. The United Arab Emirates has also demonstrated its commitment to the biodiversity agenda by hosting the largest out-post of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) which is located in Abu Dhabi and co-located with the Environment Agency. The generous voluntary contribution made on behalf of the United Arab Emirates ensures an adequate environment for work to be carried out on addressing common threats to migratory species of regional interest, while promoting CMS and its agreements in the West Asian and north-west Indian Ocean regions. We are delighted to see the tangible contributions and work being done by the United Arab Emirates to promote the biodiversity agenda, their hosting of this workshop is yet another example of the dedication of the United Arab Emirates to these values.

The significance of the sub-regions of West Asia and North Africa in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and benefit sharing cannot be understated. Jordan was the first country to ratify the Nagoya Protocol symbolizing its commitment to the Nagoya Protocol and to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In October 2013 Egypt joined Jordan by ratifying the Nagoya Protocol. It is heartening to listen the announcement on behalf of Excellency Rashid Ahmed Bin Fahad, Honorable Minister Environment and Water about the conclusion of approval process in UAE to ratify the Nagoya Protocol. It is indeed a befitting way to start this workshop and I congratulate and thank the host country for this great achievement. I earnestly hope that UAE deposits its instrument as early as possible and facilitate bringing this landmark treaty into force. I hope this will emulate other countries from the region especially Sudan, Morocco, Mauritania, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Yemen to conclude their processes and deposit their instruments by July 7. This week's workshop will provide plenty of opportunities for you to learn more about the benefits of the Nagoya Protocol and provide inspiration for the rest of the countries in the sub-regions by developing concrete plans to ratify/accede to the Protocol.

Distinguished Participants:

The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing 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. One of the many benefits of the Nagoya Protocol is that it provides 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 and associated traditional knowledge. 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, protect traditional knowledge and further enhance the contribution of biological diversity to sustainable development and human well-being.

As you may all be aware, we are currently in the homestretch towards the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol. 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. We are delighted to inform you that to date, 36 countries and the European Union have deposited their instruments of ratification. We are optimistic, especially following UAE's approval, that the Protocol will receive the remaining 14 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 Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol concurrently with the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, taking place in October 2014 in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Aichi Target 16, adopted at the tenth Conference of the Parties to the CBD as a part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets, states that: "By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefit Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation." We are on track towards achieving Aichi Target 16 in advance of the target date. Everyone in this room has the ability to contribute to the achievement of this target.

I take this opportunity to urge all countries present, that have not yet done so, to expedite their national processes towards ratifying or acceding to the Protocol so that they can participate as Parties in the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol (COP-MOP 1) and play an important role in influencing the first decisions that will guide the implementation of this important international instrument. Please use the opportunity provided by this workshop to develop road maps and action plans towards the ratification and implementation of the Protocol.

As stated by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki- Moon, in his letter sent in April of 2013 to all Heads of States, the Protocol will make valuable contributions to sustainable development. The Protocol was also the subject of a special event in the Second Committee of the General Assembly held in New York in October 2013. In addition, in December 2013 the General Assembly, in resolution A/RES/68/214, invited parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to the Nagoya Protocol so as to ensure its early entry into force and its implementation.

Distinguished Participants,

The objective of this workshop is to promote further understanding of the Protocol's provisions and requirements and to strengthen your capacity to ratify/accede to the Protocol and prepare for its effective implementation with a view to contributing to the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 16. I am convinced that as we work through the various presentations, group discussions and hands-on training the knowledge that you will gain will serve as greater insight into the importance of ratifying and implementing the Nagoya Protocol.

I look forward to working together in the spirit of collaboration and I look forward to open discussions, concrete outcomes and clear practical steps for the way forward in West Asia and North Africa.

Thank you.