



STATEMENT BY
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

**EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC,
TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. Many of you have been involved in the discussions of the Working Group on Review of Implementation last week and various events over a busy weekend. Nevertheless, I hope you had a bit of time to relax. And for those who have just arrived, welcome back to Montreal.

After some experiments regarding the format of your last meeting, and a thorough analysis of the experience, we hope that this meeting will provide an appropriate mix of elements to lead to good outcomes. I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and your colleagues in the SBSTTA Bureau, for your leadership in shaping this meeting in light of the many important items on the agenda.

Let me also thank the Governments of Finland, Norway, Japan and Spain for providing financial resources to support the participation of representatives from the least developed countries and small island developing States and the Government of Germany for its support for the attendance of representatives from indigenous and local communities. At the same time, I have to note that the absence of other donors means that we were only able, this time, to extend support to a few other developing countries and countries with economies in transition. As we prepare for COP-12, I would like to appeal to all donor countries to provide the funds necessary to allow full participation. Open-ended meetings of the CBD without the adequate participation of Parties can be questioned regarding their legitimacy.

Together with the outcomes of last week's meeting and those held in October last year, the results of your work will enable the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, in October, to undertake an assessment of progress made in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to guide further action for enhancing implementation to enable us to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020.

I expect that the work of the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting will result in a number of decisions that, collectively, could be known as the "Pyeongchang Roadmap". It could include elements on capacity-building, enhancement of technical and scientific cooperation and other initiatives and measures regarding resource mobilization and the financial mechanism, which have been prepared by the Working Group on Review of Implementation last week together with a draft decision on how the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets contribute to sustainable development and on how biodiversity can be further integrated into the sustainable development agenda.

The Pyeongchang Roadmap would also include elements that provide for further tools and guidance, where necessary, to assist implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. There could be general elements that cut across all Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as specific elements for each of the 20 targets. Your work this week, together with the outcomes of SBSTTA-17, is expected to provide the basis for that. I encourage you to keep this big picture in mind when preparing draft recommendations for the Conference of the Parties, so that the Pyeongchang Roadmap will be a concise and coherent set of decisions that will help us to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity by 2020 and achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the objectives and targets under the revised NBSAPs.

The starting point for our considerations at this meeting of SBSTTA is the draft of the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* that you have in front of you. As we see from the analysis underlying this report, we are making progress in many areas but in most cases the level of progress is currently not sufficient to enable us to reach the point at which we need to be in six years from now. I am deeply concerned about this situation. At the same time, I remain optimistic that we can achieve the outcomes that we committed ourselves to reach when the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity was adopted in Nagoya in 2010. Missing the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would be a failure for all of us and a failure for sustainable

development. Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would be a success for all of us and we can only do this together and with a common sense of purpose.

You have heard me say this before: Let us therefore focus on ways in which we can help each other to overcome obstacles. Let us learn from each other about approaches that have been successful and could be adapted for replication elsewhere. Let us put our efforts into enhancing implementation of our decisions rather than focusing only on negotiating new decisions. Let us be practical and forward-looking. And let us make sure to see the biodiversity agenda in the broader context of sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting benefits from a large amount of new information. A total of 81 Parties have, through their fifth national reports, provided information on progress in implementation of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans. I would like to urge all parties that have not done so to finalize and submit their fifth national reports before COP 12. Twenty-six Parties have updated their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan since 2010. In addition, Parties have shared their experiences in numerous technical and capacity-building workshops that have been held and all this information is pulled together in the documentation that has been prepared on the various agenda items.

Let me highlight some examples to illustrate this point:

You have a draft of the fourth edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook* in front of you. Those of you who were able to participate in the workshop on GBO-4 on Saturday will know that this has been an extremely ambitious undertaking. It draws on the thorough analysis of available national reports and NBSAPs. It makes use of the latest scientific literature. It benefits from updated indicator information through members of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. It builds on statistical projections of over 50 indicators to assess progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and combines this with information about plans and commitments from Parties to underpin statements about whether or not we are on track to meet the targets. It further builds on reviews of longer-term scenarios and some new global scenario work to assess the chances of achieving the vision of the Strategic Plan by 2050, and, based on the careful analysis of all this information, it draws conclusions of the kinds of actions that would be needed to successfully implement the Strategic Plan.

The second example I want to give is the CBD process to describe ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, also called “EBSAs”. Through a series of nine regional workshops, held in collaboration with various global and regional partners, the CBD EBSA process has compiled a substantial amount of scientific information in describing over 200 important ocean areas around the world. The EBSA process has facilitated the sharing of scientific information, networking of experts across disciplines, and enhanced collaboration for marine conservation and sustainable use, with the goal of supporting the efforts of Parties and relevant organizations in working towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity.

Thirdly, among the issues related to invasive alien species that we will also consider at this meeting, is an analysis of the pathways that facilitate their introduction. The work before you on this topic draws from the expertise and data of the IUCN species specialist group on invasive species and other members of the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership.

On synthetic biology, you have been provided with two information notes, one containing a thorough analysis of potential positive and negative impacts of components, organisms and products resulting from synthetic biology techniques on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and another information note on the possible gaps and overlaps with the applicable provisions of the Convention and its Protocols.

The work on GBO-4, the EBSA descriptions, invasive alien species and synthetic biology illustrate that the Convention relies on credible scientific assessment processes to prepare technical documentation

and, on that basis, draws policy relevant conclusions and guidance that can help streamlining efforts where they are most effective and urgent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are looking at a busy week with a broad range of issues. Allow me, though, to draw your attention, in addition, to a few other initiatives that are relevant to our process and our work towards the objectives of the Convention.

While we meet here, your Environment Ministers and other colleagues from your ministries, representatives of major groups and stakeholders are gathered in Nairobi to participate in the Inaugural United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA). UNEA is a result of the call made by world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to strengthen and upgrade UNEP by establishing universal membership in its Governing Council. As the new governing body of UNEP, UNEA has the mandate to take strategic decisions, provide political guidance in the work of UNEP and promote a strong science-policy interface. UNEA can also recommend draft resolutions for adoption by the United Nations General Assembly for system-wide implementation. In this respect, UNEA can help in highlighting the central importance of biodiversity for sustainable development.

Another process that is under way is the development of the sustainable development goals in which biodiversity features explicitly in a larger political context. The promotion of biodiversity, not as a problem to be solved but, rather, as an opportunity to help decision-making processes achieve broader societal goals on the social and economic fronts, is crucial. As indicated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want”, biodiversity has a critical role to play in maintaining ecosystems that provide essential services, which are the foundations for sustainable development, human well-being, livelihoods and poverty eradication. The 12th session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals was held last week at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

On 22 May 2014, we celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity with the theme Island Biodiversity. This day reminded us that islands and their surrounding near-shore marine areas constitute unique ecosystems often comprising many plant and animal species that are found nowhere else on Earth. The year 2014 was designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Year of Small Island Developing States, and, from 1 to 4 September 2014, the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States will be held in Apia, Samoa, to focus the world’s attention on a group of countries that remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. All these initiatives will support the effective implementation of the Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity under the Convention and highlight the positive role that biodiversity is fit to play in the broader context of sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turning back to the things on our plate this week, as you already said, Chair, the agenda is full and it will be challenging for all of us, and particularly for small delegations. Let us therefore focus on those things that move us forward towards the full implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and that enable us to make a meaningful contribution to the sustainable development agenda. Let us keep in mind the scientific and technical needs that were discussed at SBSTTA-17 and focus on discussing those things that help us address those needs and overcome the obstacles that prevent us from making progress.

With this spirit, I am confident that the agenda for this meeting is manageable, and I wish you successful deliberations.

I would like to finish by paying tribute to one of our most dedicated staff members, Robert Hoft, who recently fell ill but is now recovering at home. He will be missed during this meeting, for which he contributed significantly. We wish him a quick recovery.

Thank you.
