



STATEMENT BY
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ON THE OCCASION OF
THE CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR MESOAMERICA ON ECOSYSTEM
CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION TO SUPPORT ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

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Convention on
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**Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure to welcome to you all to this capacity-building workshop for Mesoamerica on ecosystem conservation and restoration. It is a true pleasure for the CBD Secretariat to be able to organize this workshop, in close collaboration with the Government of Costa Rica and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in the beautiful country of Costa Rica which is blessed with vast natural richness- from the Talamanca Range to the Isla del Caño Biological Reserve. I was impressed to learn that currently, one quarter of this territory is protected parkland and that more than half is covered by forests. This represents a dramatic progress from a few years ago and it demonstrates that Costa Rica knows that treasuring the environment increases natural wealth. Furthermore, Costa Rica has a goal of becoming carbon neutral by the year 2021, which is worthy of applause.

However, we all remain aware of the several threats to biodiversity that the Mesoamerican region faces. 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 were 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. We therefore turn to you to identify best practices, drawing from your experiences, and to share among other regions how we can map, assess and prioritize actions to best conserve and restore biodiversity, at different levels, in support of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

At this workshop we will focus on three of the quantitative area-based Aichi Biodiversity Targets to: halve the rate of loss of natural habitats, including forests, and reduce degradation and fragmentation (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 complement many other targets. Making progress in these areas clearly requires inter- and cross-sectoral approaches with the full participation of governmental authorities, focal points, indigenous and local communities, and the private sector.

It is therefore constructive to have experts on environment and forestry representing countries from this region, as well as experts from different organizations, including academia and indigenous and local communities. We also welcome representatives from the Republic of Korea, as incoming presidency of the 12th Conference of the Parties, and experts from other countries. I expect that this mixture of experiences will foster a fruitful exchange of views to identify critical pressures undermining our ecosystem's health and resilience, and opportunities to promote integrated actions across a landscape of sectors.

In this regard, I wish to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Governments of Japan, Germany, Canada as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for generously providing the necessary financial support for this workshop. I would also like to give special thanks to the Government of Costa Rica, through its Ministry of Environment and Energy, for hosting this workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A global momentum is 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. As we prepare for COP 12 in the Republic of Korea this October, we anticipate building on these initiatives to further support countries in developing and implementing their national restoration targets.

The Mesoamerican region has commendable initiatives on restoration and conservation. Aside from Costa Rica's Payments for Environmental Services Program and Biological Monitoring Program as an instrument to measure ecosystem restoration, El Salvador's National Restoration Plan for Landscapes and Ecosystems (PREP) adopts an innovative approach through agro-biodiversity resilience to climate, restoration of critical ecosystems, and integrated physical and natural infrastructure development. We must learn from their experience and other countries' experiences in the region.

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 identify realistic and achievable, yet ambitious, national targets and the means to achieve them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are approaching the CBD COP 12 in October this year which, as mentioned, will be hosted by the Republic of Korea. At COP 12, the Parties 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.

Drawing on your experiences, we can identify tangible actions to achieve multiple goals and targets, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

But, for gains to be made, 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.