



**OPENING REMARKS BY**

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**to the**

**TWELFTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES  
TO THE  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea  
6 October 2014**



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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Excellency, Mr. Yoon Seang-kyu, Minister of  
Environment of the Republic of Korea, and COP 12 President

Mr. Hem Pande, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate  
Change of India, and COP-11 President,

Mr. Moon-soon Choi, Governor of Gangwon Province,

Mr. Si-sung Kim, Chairperson of the Gangwon Province Council

Honourable member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, Mr Dong Yeol Yeom,

Mr. Jae Chun Choe, President of the National Institute of Ecology

Dear Friend, Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity here in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, with the theme “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development”.

I sincerely thank the COP President and his team for the careful planning and comprehensive work that has made this conference possible. I also thank the Province of Gangwon and the city of Pyeongchang for the warm hospitality we have experienced.

The Republic of Korea has much to teach the rest of the world in terms of social and economic development as well as in terms of forest conservation and restoration and its history is a lesson to us all. Less than two decades ago, the Republic of Korea was a recipient of foreign aid. In 2010 it moved from being a recipient to joining the OECD “Advanced Nations Assistance Club” as a donor. This remarkable achievement sets the Republic of Korea apart from other nations and allows it to act as a bridge between developing countries and those that are developed. This experience of the Republic of Korea as a COP President will be very useful as we all share a number of global challenges that require cooperation between developing and developed countries.

While undergoing a period of phenomenal modernization over the past 40 years, the Republic of Korea has kept its attention to the environment. As an example of this, since 1970 the Republic of Korea has increased its forest cover by a factor of 11, making it a model for ecosystem restoration and good forestry practices. This has resulted in many benefits, including the enhanced availability of freshwater and biodiversity conservation.

Korean people have a deep love of nature and biodiversity. This is reflected in their culture, religions, cuisine and art. I had the opportunity to visit, last May, the Korean National Museum in Seoul, and I would like to recommend to you not to miss an opportunity to visit this world class museum.

We look forward to working closely with the Republic of Korea as the Presidency passes from India and two successful years in which India demonstrated leadership in many key areas, particularly on links between poverty, sustainable development and biodiversity as well as on resource mobilization. For example, India undertook a comprehensive review of domestic expenditures related to biodiversity, involving the close cooperation of over 20 line ministries and other relevant institutions, as a critical step towards the development of a national resource mobilization strategy.

Ladies and gentlemen, we gather here in this inspiring mountain location, in the middle of the main forest region of the Republic of Korea and the source of most of its rivers, at a critical moment one year from the midway point in the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity to take stock of progress in implementing the Convention.

This stocktaking has been enabled by reviewing a range of information sources. Primary among these are your fifth national reports: we have 121 final and 31 draft reports totalling 152 altogether. Since COP-10, we have received 31 new national biodiversity strategies and action plans – or NBSAPs – 22 of which are aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. We are aware that many other Parties are well advanced in preparing their fifth national report and their revised NBSAP, and I would like to urge you to finalize and submit them as soon as possible. The CBD Secretariat and many partners stand ready to assist you with this.

I am happy to recognize that our host, the Republic of Korea, has completed and submitted their revised NBSAP as well as their fifth national report. I would like to commend the Republic of Korea's revised NBSAP for its six priority actions, under which 18 goals have been established that are mapped to the corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Each goal has an action plan, accompanied by targets, actions and indicators. The revised NBSAP provides information on the current status and outcomes of previous NBSAPs in relation to each goal. "Mainstreaming Biodiversity" is one of the six priority actions of the new NBSAP and the Action Plans stresses integration in and harmonization with all related policies, including at both central and local levels. The formulation of biodiversity strategies by local governments is also encouraged (notably, Gyeongsangnam-do Province and Gangwon-do Province adopted local biodiversity strategies).

Ladies and gentlemen,

Your national reports, case studies and experiences have enabled the mid-term review which you will undertake during this meeting. A major report that will be launched later today is the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, or GBO-4. This flagship publication is a periodic report that summarizes the latest data on the status and trends of biodiversity and draws conclusions relevant to the further implementation of the Convention and this fourth edition and underlying technical reports have been prepared to facilitate the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

GBO-4 tells us that there has been significant progress towards meeting some components of the majority of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Some target components, such as protecting at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and at least 10 per cent of coastal marine areas, are on track to be met. However, despite the dramatic increase in responses by Parties to the loss of biodiversity, indicators suggest that the status of biodiversity will continue to decline without urgent action. Many of you have contributed time, financial resources and information to this report, and I sincerely thank you all for this. The launch of GBO-4 will happen at the end of this morning's session.

Other important reports will be launched at this conference, among which I wish to highlight the report of the High Level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (information document 4), the Review of Global Assessments of Land and Ecosystem Degradation and their Relevance in Achieving the Land-based Aichi Biodiversity Targets (information document 18) and the report ICCAs & Aichi Targets, which describes the contribution of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Community Conserved Territories and Areas to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (information document 21), to list but a few.

I would also like to draw your attention to the *Living Planet Report 2014*, recently released by WWF, and the soon-to-be-released *Protected Planet Report 2014*, to be launched by IUCN at the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, next month. You can check a preview of the updated new figures in the flyer we have prepared for this meeting, "A Decade of Implementing the CBD's programme of work on protected areas". In addition, I would like to draw your attention to the update note on National Red Lists provided by IUCN in supporting the implementation of Aichi Target 12.

Ladies and gentlemen

One of the main outcomes of this meeting is expected to be the Pyeongchang Roadmap, which would be informed by the urgent actions recommended in the GBO-4 and comprised of the relevant decisions from this COP that address those urgent actions. The decisions forming the Pyeongchang Roadmap should provide for further tools and guidance, where necessary, to assist the further implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as for further capacity-building, enhancement of technical and scientific cooperation and other initiatives and measures regarding resource mobilization and the financial mechanism.

Implementation of Article 18 of the Convention that is about technical and scientific cooperation has been underachieved, leaving ample room for more positive practices. We are currently enhancing the Clearing-house Mechanism to facilitate the multi-directional flow of information, but there is a great need to upscale activities to achieve what was set out in Article 18 of the Convention. There is an opportunity to make progress on this as you will further consider the options recommended by WGRI-5 on the development of a coherent, consistent and coordinated approach to technical and scientific cooperation. The Secretariat has been working with the Republic of Korea on an initiative called "Bio-Bridge" that will be launched at a side event on the evening of October 7<sup>th</sup> in the Rio Pavilion to contribute to this ongoing effort.

There is also much work to be done here on marine and coastal biodiversity issues. At SBSTTA-18 in June a number of reports from regional workshops describing ecologically and biologically significant areas were reviewed and recommended for adoption at this COP. Impacts of ocean acidification, underwater noise, marine debris on biodiversity and ecosystem function, marine spatial planning and much more will also be considered. There is a great opportunity to advance this marine agenda here in Pyeongchang.

At this meeting you will also discuss options for the form and content of a process to enhance coordination, coherence and national-level synergies among the governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions.

Moreover, you will have an opportunity to look at ways of improving the efficiency of the mechanisms and processes of the Convention and its Protocols by, for example, considering how to hold concurrent meetings for the Biosafety Protocol, the Nagoya Protocol and the CBD. You will also consider the establishment of a new subsidiary body on implementation to replace the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention in line with the recommendation from WGRI to this COP. In this context I wish to call your attention to the decision taken at COP/MOP7 of the Cartagena Protocol last week on these issues (decision L10) as well as to the report on the Functional Review of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (information document 26).

By 14 July 2014, 51 Parties to the CBD had deposited their instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Nagoya Protocol, reaching the required number of ratifications for its entry into force on 12 October 2014. On that date, those 51 CBD Parties become Parties to the Nagoya Protocol. Other Parties are finalizing the national consultation process and review of their legal framework and will soon be joining the Nagoya Protocol.

I am delighted that we will hold the first Nagoya Protocol COP-MOP concurrently with the CBD COP from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of October. With its recent entry into force, the Nagoya Protocol enables addressing the third objective of the Convention – the equitable sharing of benefits from the use of the genetic resources of our planet. The CBD can now truly be said to be an instrument of sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we meet in Pyeongchang, we will have the opportunity to discuss our shared global vision for biodiversity and work to link the Strategic Plan with the global agenda for sustainable development. As you may be aware, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals concluded their work in August of this year and produced a draft proposal of sustainable development goals that is aligned with the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As the United Nations General Assembly finalizes its work on the SDGs, it is particularly fitting that the Government of the Republic of Korea has chosen the interface of biodiversity and sustainable development as the theme of this COP.

There will be a number of different opportunities to further reflect on linkages with other sustainable development goals processes.

The high-level segment, which runs from 15 to 16 October 2014, will be an important forum for discussions of the essential role of biodiversity for sustainable development. These dialogues will be key in building greater momentum for mainstreaming biodiversity beyond the core biodiversity community and ensuring the central role of biodiversity in the post-2015 agenda. There will also be panels on Biodiversity and Climate Change, on Creative Economy, Biodiversity and Peace, on the Sustainable Ocean Initiative and on the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative.

As usual, there are also a number of different parallel and side events that will contribute substantially to the outcomes of this meeting. Running in parallel with the two working groups are the Rio Conventions Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion, the Communication, Education and Public Awareness Fair, the Interactive Fair on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development, the 4th Global Biodiversity Platform for Business meeting, a high-level meeting on cities and local authorities for biodiversity and a high-level meeting on Biodiversity and Peace.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In closing, I would like take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the Governments of Denmark, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, which have provided generous financial support to ensure that 76 participants from developing countries to attend this meeting. I thank them for their active and continued support for the Convention. In this connection, I am pleased to inform you that 172 Parties have pre-registered for this meeting and more than 8,054 participants are pre-registered.

With this, I wish you the best of luck in your deliberations in these two weeks building on the constructive spirit and mood that prevailed in the COP/MOP7 meeting last week, and I reiterate our deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea, Gangwon Province and the City of Pyeongchang for hosting this meeting in such a beautiful and inspiring setting.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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