



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
MR. BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS**

on the occasion of

**THE SEMINAR-WORKSHOP ON HARMONIZING METHODS IN RISK ASSESSMENT AND
MANAGEMENT OF FOREST INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT SPECIES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA**

2-5 December 2014

Bogor, Indonesia

Distinguished delegates,
Fellow scientists at the SEAMEO BIOTROP,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you on the occasion of this important seminar-workshop on “Harmonizing Methods in Risk Assessment and Management of Forest Invasive Alien Plant Species in Southeast Asia” at the SEAMEO BIOTROP.

In October 2014 at its twelfth meeting in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity reviewed the progress on implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. This mid-term assessment of progress was underpinned by the fourth edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook - GBO4 in brief. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all scientists and practitioners, including many of you here, who provided up-to-date information and thereby contributed to GBO4 and its underlying technical reports.

GBO4 informs us that reversing the threat from invasive alien species is often feasible and effective as evidenced by a growing number of eradications, particularly from islands. However the overall rate of invasions, with great economic and ecological costs, shows no sign of slowing. Increased efforts to identify and control the main pathways responsible for species invasions are therefore crucial. Among these are the development of effective border control or quarantine measures to reduce the likelihood of potentially invasive alien species being introduced, and making full use of risk analysis and risk management approaches in line with international standards and tested national approaches.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to note that Southeast Asia has already gathered experiences in reducing ecological impacts of invasive alien species. You may recall that *Acacia nilotica*, the gum arabic tree, was planted in Bogor Botanical Garden in the 1800s from where it escaped. It was intentionally planted as fire breaks in some national parks which provide the habitat of an iconic native species, *Bos javanicus*, commonly called



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Banteng. The tree spread within a few decades to dominate some 10,000 ha of Baluran National Park and thereby destroyed more than a half of the native savanna upon which the threatened Banteng population depends.

The GEF funded project, “Removing the barrier to invasive alien species management in production and protection forest in Southeast Asia” controlled the spread of *Acacia nilotica* by using integrated measures with mechanical, chemical and with biocontrol agent that was proven to be safe for the native plant community. Thanks to the Governments in the region, the United Nations Environmental Programme, CABI and other partners, we have learned from the successful international efforts that risk assessment prior to introduction of biocontrol agents played a critical role in the Baluran National Park management success. With such good practices and experiences in the region I hope that this meeting will lead to concrete outcomes on applying comprehensive risk assessment methodologies and management options that support decision making on national legislation, border controls and the best applicable risk management in production areas as well as those designated for protection. To do so in a collaborative manner it would be most effective to systematically apply already existing approaches, including the international standard, “Pest risk analysis for quarantine pest including environmental risks and living modified organisms” established under the International Plant Protection Convention, especially where plant protection is concerned.

With regard to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services, The recent publication on Plant Invasions in Protected Areas – Patterns, Problems and Challenges showed that anthropogenic pressures such as climate change, habitat fragmentation and landscape change influence the probability of establishment and spread of alien species. Thanks to the authors and the publisher, an electronic version of the book has been made available to the public for a limited time and is still available for download from the CBD invasive alien species web site.

Needless to say that scientific collaboration between the sectors for plant pest management and the environment is needed more than ever. The more invasion biology experts actively contribute to these developments the greater the chance we have that effective risk assessment and risk management methodologies are available and applied where they are needed.

I am fully convinced that your meeting helps to mobilize information on best practices in Southeast Asia and elsewhere and that such information will be fed into the global process of developing new and essential tools to deal with biological invasions. Your expertise is vital in conserving biodiversity in places of cultural or historical importance, such as Baluran National Park.

I wish you a successful meeting and I look forward to receiving outputs of this timely and important gathering as it supports Parties in the ASEAN region and beyond to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 on invasive alien species, while contributing to other related targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

Thank you.