



VIDEO STATEMENT

OF

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

On the occasion of

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FOR GAME AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**

“HEALTHY WILDLIFE, HEALTHY PEOPLE”

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Distinguished participants, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a pleasure to address you at this 62nd General Assembly of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC). Let me take this opportunity to thank the Government of Bulgaria, as well as the CIC and the World Organization for Animal Health for organizing this event.

Bulgaria is a country with extraordinary wildlife. For centuries local communities in Bulgaria have established profound connections to their land, resources and traditions. Over many generations, the identities, livelihoods, and cultures of many communities have helped to shape the biodiversity within them. The deep interconnectedness between people, wildlife and ecosystems has played a critical role in maintaining the health and wellbeing of many, through the conservation and sustainable use biodiversity.

Issued last year, Bulgaria's 5th National Report to the CBD exemplified the development of several national strategies and plans, including the National Strategy for Development of the Forestry Sector 2013–2020, the Strategy for the Development of Hunting 2012–2027, the National Plan for the Protection of the most important Wetlands 2013-2022, among others. Determining the priorities, measures, activities and key actors related to the sustainable use and conservation of wildlife and their resources has been a central aspect of these programmes.

Despite these legal frameworks, Bulgaria, as also happens in other countries, faces numerous challenges. Many are linked to increased poverty, loss of traditional governance systems, rising profits from illicit activities, urbanization, among other land use and climate related threats. Growing human population, increased intensity in the consumption of natural resources, hunting pressures and loss of natural habitat, both in space and quality, moreover exacerbate threats to many of the world's plant and animal species. This in turn, jeopardises food security, human health and the livelihood of many vulnerable people. The 4th edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, released in October of 2014, reported that the combination of such pressures has triggered the decline of many wildlife species, with impacts to ecosystem functions and stability, and the livelihoods of local communities.

The impact of declining wild populations of species that are important for subsistence use or income generation on livelihoods is fundamental to this year's CIC discussion. Addressing these connections can no longer be overlooked. Approaching these complexities requires a vision that goes beyond top down regulations and enforcement, to one that engages communities with shared responsibility.

If conservation programmes are to be sustainable in the long term they will require the participation and involvement of local people. Therefore, finding approaches to empower and incentivize local communities through management practices that recognize and respect the rights and stewardship responsibility of people who use and manage the resources is critical. Fiscal and other incentive measures, coupled to community based approaches are other enabling

factors that have been effective in several countries to increase wildlife populations and reduce illegal use.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Governance is central to the CBD when addressing wildlife issues. The Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity provide a central guide for resource managers to use biodiversity in a sustainable manner for long term conservation aims. Based on the Convention's Article 10(c) on customary sustainable use rights and Article 8(j) on traditional ecological knowledge, the CBD also seeks to incorporate the cultural, nutritional, medicinal and economic values of wildlife for indigenous people and local communities in strategies to reduce the ecological impact of hunting.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, serves as a global framework to conserve, restore and sustainably use biodiversity and enhance its benefits for people. Wildlife conservation is at the heart of this Plan, which includes in its mission to, "take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity".

Aichi Biodiversity Target 12, for example, aims to prevent the extinction of threatened species by 2020 and improve the conservation status of those species most in decline. Other Aichi Targets, notably Targets 5, 7, 9 and 13, respectively, deal with halting the rate of loss of natural forests, addressing the area under sustainable agriculture and forestry, applying measures to control and prevent invasive alien species, and safeguarding genetic diversity of wild animals and plants, including other socio-economically and culturally valuable species. Also relevant to wildlife conservation are Targets 3, 4, 11 and 18, respectively, on incentive measures, sustainable consumption and production, protected area systems and traditional knowledge.

Other measures to heighten awareness on the multiple dimensions of sustainable wildlife management have been emerging through the joint work of the Collaborative Partnership on Wildlife Management. Several studies will be carried out by the Partnership in the course of 2015-2016 focusing on governance based approaches.

In closing, let me convey that the Secretariat stands ready to support countries as they update their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans to meet Aichi Target 17. In addressing their national biodiversity priorities, aligned to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, an important consideration will be to further devise partnership arrangements with key stakeholders, including local communities to foster targeted impact on the ground. By working together with various stakeholders that value biodiversity you can ensure the conservation of wildlife and preserve the critical habitats for these species to endure now and for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.