



STATEMENT BY

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

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

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**Convention on
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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the nineteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and to welcome you all back to Montreal. It has been a year since we gathered in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, for COP 12, where important decisions were taken. Your deliberations here will not only help to set the stage for future work at SBSTTA 20, the first meeting of the newly established Subsidiary Body on Implementation and COP13, but also help to reinforce progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The results of your deliberations will also ultimately help to bring us closer to attaining the 2050 Vision of the Strategic Plan – a world where biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used for the benefit of all people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and your colleagues in the SBSTTA Bureau, for your leadership in shaping this meeting. I am certain that, under your guidance and that of the other members of the Bureau, our discussions here over the coming days will be fruitful.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden for providing financial resources to support the participation of representatives of least developed countries, small island developing States and/or representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities. The convening of meetings would not be possible without such support. However, at the same time, I must note that the absence of other donors has meant that we were not able to accommodate all of the requests for support that we received from eligible Parties. As we prepare for the next meeting of SBSTTA, the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, or SBI, the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, in Cancún, Mexico, I would like to appeal to all donor countries to provide the funds necessary to allow for full participation. Meetings without adequate participation may raise issues of legitimacy and jeopardize the work of the Convention.

The format of this SBSTTA, which will be a shorter SBSTTA as a result of a cost-savings decision taken at COP 12, is unique in that it is being held over four days and two of those days are being shared with the ninth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This means that you have less time at your disposal for your discussions. However, while this poses some challenges, the fact that SBSTTA is being held back to back with the meeting of the Working Group on Article 8(j) also represents an opportunity for greater coherence between the two bodies and for the greater participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in SBSTTA.

I am also pleased to report that the functional review of the Secretariat is proceeding well. The results of the functional review will enable the Secretariat to be able to better respond to your needs and ultimately contribute to the enhanced implementation of the Convention.

You may have heard that the United Nations system is in the process of implementing a new resource management system. The introduction of this system, called Umoja, has meant that we have had to adjust many of our internal administrative procedures. We recognize that this transition has not been as smooth as we all would have liked and that there are still some issues that need to be resolved. As a result, unfortunately the payment of DSA to funded delegates will only be possible tomorrow, Tuesday and not today as per our usual practice. We appreciate your understanding as we cope with these challenges and are confident that, with your support and with that of our colleagues throughout the United Nations system, we will overcome them in the near future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

According to the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, there has been significant progress towards meeting some components of the majority of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets but, in most cases, this progress will not be sufficient to achieve the targets set for 2020, and that significant additional action is required to keep the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 on course. Given this, the agenda for this meeting is particularly relevant as a great deal of it focuses on addressing the scientific and technical needs, which will greatly enhance our ability to implement the Strategic Plan. In particular, your deliberations in the coming days on the mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity across sectors, on tools to evaluate the effectiveness of policy instruments and on indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan are highly relevant in helping us to chart the path ahead and to make the most of the time we have between now and 2020.

Addressing biodiversity loss in a meaningful way will require the involvement of those sectors which depend on biodiversity for their sustainability but which also have a large impact on biodiversity. Thus, mainstreaming of biodiversity issues into forestry, agriculture and fisheries is essential if the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the 2050 Vision of the Strategic Plan, are to be met. A number of information documents have been prepared on this issue to support you in your deliberations during this meeting. Specifically, I would like to draw your attention to information documents 1, 3, 6 and 17, which examine the progress made in, and offer different possible approaches to, the mainstreaming of biodiversity into the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors. Further, information document number 4/Rev.1, prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, examines the contribution of FAO's five principles for sustainable agriculture to the attainment of Aichi Biodiversity Target 7.

During this meeting, we will also hear about progress in the implementation of the 2014-2018 work programme of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, or IPBES. I am looking forward to seeing the results of IPBES' fast-track thematic assessment of pollinators, pollination and food production as a first deliverable, as well as, later on, the results of the regional and global assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem

services. The results of these assessments will be particularly relevant to the work of the Convention, as they relate to the next edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*.

There are also a number of other issues for your consideration during this meeting. One of these issues relates to biodiversity and human health. You have before you the executive summary of the report *Connecting Global Priorities: Biodiversity and Human Health, a State of Knowledge Review*, which was jointly prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention and the World Health Organization. The report identifies and explores health-biodiversity linkages, and its key messages are particularly relevant in the light of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Another issue that you will consider over the coming days is climate-related geoengineering. To support your discussions on this issue, an update on climate geoengineering in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its potential impacts and regulatory framework has been prepared. This document updates the information which was previously made available in Technical Series 66.

Lastly, with regard to forest biodiversity, I would like to bring to your attention three documents: official document number 8 and information document numbers 3 and 17. The first of these examines the role of international organizations in supporting the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The second provides information on the contributions of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to the achievement of the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As you are all aware, implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity is a large task which requires partnerships and collaborations along the lines outline in these documents.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since COP 12, a number of international processes relevant to biodiversity have taken actions which have implications for the future work of the Convention.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 was adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, Japan. The framework places emphasis on disaster prevention through risk-sensitive development programming, as well as on disaster response and reconstruction. For the first time in an international disaster risk reduction framework, the sustainable management of ecosystems is recognized as a way to build disaster resilience.

Also, as you may be aware, at the beginning of its seventieth session, in September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the outcome document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity and comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals divided into more than 160 targets. Goals 14 and 15 of the Agenda are dedicated to marine and terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems, but biodiversity, ecosystems and genetic resources are also reflected explicitly in many of the other Sustainable Development Goals.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda is an important step forward as it makes clear the important role that biodiversity plays in sustainable development. By bringing increased attention to issues associated with poverty eradication, sustainable consumption, food and water security and equity, the 2030 Agenda significantly enhances the enabling environment for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. Similarly, biodiversity, and therefore the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, will play a vital role in the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda. The links between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the targets adopted as part of the Sustainable Development Goals are examined in information document number nine. The Convention needs to be ready to take advantage of the opportunity these developments represent.

More recently, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at its twelfth session, which was held from 12 to 23 October 2015 in Ankara, Turkey, adopted a number of important decisions. Among them was a decision on land degradation neutrality and a decision on leveraging of synergies among the Rio Conventions, which includes indicators on land-based processes with implications for the use of joint indicators between the three Rio Conventions.

Further, in a few weeks, the Paris Climate Conference will also get under way. Like all of you I am looking forward to an agreement that will help us all to address climate change in a meaningful way. While climate change will potentially become a major cause of biodiversity decline globally, biodiversity offers a number of effective avenues for addressing it, both for mitigation and adaptation. An agreement in Paris that considers these two issues will greatly support our efforts at implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

It is heartening to note that over 65 per cent of the 126 intended nationally determined contributions, or INDCs, submitted by last week include actions to reduce emissions, and strengthen removals, from the land use sector. Most of the INDCs focus on forests, with some also encompassing wetlands. It is encouraging that so many UNFCCC Parties recognize the important role of ecosystems in reducing global emissions. Earlier this year, I issued a notification to Parties, bringing the INDC process to their attention and encouraging them to contribute to the process using tools and guidance developed under CBD. I hope that CBD Parties will continue to engage with their UNFCCC counterparts in order to strengthen the role of ecosystems in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

I would also like to draw your attention to a new international research platform which has implications for the work of the Convention. Future Earth is an international hub for coordinating new, interdisciplinary approaches to research on global environmental change. It is open to scientists of all disciplines, natural and social, as well as engineering, the humanities and law. Some of you here have participated in a workshop which was held last Saturday on this initiative. I look forward to further collaboration with Future Earth, which has Montreal as one of its five global hubs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is a wealth of information before you for this meeting. This information, in part, comes from your national reports and national biodiversity strategies and action plans. I urge those few parties that have not yet prepared and submitted their fifth national report and the larger number of Parties that have yet to revise their NBSAP to do so as soon as possible so that your experiences and priorities can be better reflected in the work of the Convention. The information for this meeting also comes from your discussions during workshops and technical meetings that many of you here have participated in as well as from numerous partner organizations that are helping to advance our understanding of biodiversity. I urge you to make the most of this information in your deliberations.

With five years left to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and in order to reach the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, we need to significantly increase our efforts. Therefore, over the coming days, let us focus our discussions on those scientific, technical and technological issues which will help us move forward. In this respect, I hope that we will harness the opportunity that the newly established Subsidiary Body on Implementation presents, alongside the work of SBSTTA, to give new impetus to the review of progress of action taken in implementing the Convention, its Protocols and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which is crucial if we are to meet the targets and enhance our actions to overcome obstacles in implementation. I trust that, together, complementing each other's work, SBSTTA and SBI can prepare the ground for bold steps by the Conference of the Parties towards achieving our 2050 Vision: that, by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.

Delegates, let me conclude by bringing to your attention an important issue related to the Global Environment Facility. As a follow-up to decision XII/30, members of the GEF 7 Needs Assessment Expert Group are making themselves available in room C on level 1 of this building to guide Parties in completing the questionnaire to assess your country needs as an input to the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility.

I need to stress that, in the absence of a significant number of submissions from Parties by the extended deadline of 4 December 2015, the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will fail to forward a credible assessment of the amount of GEF funds needed for the period 2018-2022. Therefore, I very strongly urge you to ensure that this questionnaire is submitted in time and use the opportunity of the presence of the Expert Group members in Montreal.

With this, I wish you successful deliberations, and, as always, the Secretariat stands ready to support you.

Thank you.
