



STATEMENT

OF

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

on the occasion of

the fifty-first session of the International Tropical Timber Council

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address you at the fifty-first session of the International Tropical Timber Council with good news late on a day you have spent in difficult negotiations.

In October 2015, at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, the secretariats of CBD and ITTO renewed an agreement to continue to collaborate over a six-year period (2015-2020) to enhance biodiversity conservation in tropical forests. Through the Joint ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative, the agreement supports efforts of countries to address the main drivers of biodiversity loss in tropical forests, with the direct participation of local stakeholders.

By focusing on objectives common to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the ITTO Strategic Action Plan, the joint initiative has resulted in advancements in support of country activities that protect against the introduction of invasive species, create capacities to monitor forest change, improve the welfare of local communities and enhance the value of natural tropical forests to avoid land use change.

The 11 projects funded by the joint initiative, covering 26 countries, in the three tropical forest basin regions serve as an example of aligned inter-institutional efforts to support the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the ITTO Strategic Action Plan.

As we enter the new period of the joint initiative, we will continue to look for novel ways to integrate biodiversity objectives into the forest sector. With support from the Korea Forest Service of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI) has enabled CBD, in consultation with ITTO, to review project proposals under the joint initiative and identify potential projects for which FERI funds could be targeted.

Given the scope of the project PD 765/14 Rev2 F, and the intention to support the achievement of the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the importance attached to inter-institutional coordination for the management of forests, I am pleased to recognize the contribution of the Republic of Korea in the amount of US\$ 100,000 for the development of a forest landscape restoration programme in Guatemala that requires an additional US\$ 500,000 to become fully operational.

While our focus will lie on the biodiversity-related components of the project, the CBD Secretariat looks forward to working with the stakeholders of the project as a member of the Forest Landscape Restoration Board, and we ask other donors to consider supporting this project.

We anticipate that this will be the first of many more projects to receive co-funding from FERI in support of the Joint ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for tropical forest biodiversity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The renewed ITTO-CBD joint initiative comes at an opportune time to support the achievement of the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets, providing a relevant example of cross-sectoral collaboration, at various levels of government, to advance forest-related commitments and goals by 2020 and beyond.

With this, I wish you a successful meeting with fruitful discussions.

Thank you for your attention.
