



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO F. DE SOUZA DIAS
on the occasion of the Adoption of the Paris Agreement at
COP-21 of the UNFCCC
12 DECEMBER 2015**

I welcome the adoption of the Paris Agreement today by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This historic outcome is the result of years of work by the international community and I congratulate all those involved, including Christiana Figueres, the Executive Secretary to the UNFCCC, and Minister Laurent Fabius, the president of COP-21.

If we would continue with business as usual, the world would be on a dangerous path to a global average temperature increase of 4 degrees or more above pre-industrial levels. The commitments already made by countries through their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), when implemented, will move the world from this dangerous path to one of 3 degrees or less. I welcome the ambitious commitments in the Paris Agreement that aim to hold the increase to well-below 2 degrees, and also pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees. The provision for regular, frequent and robust mechanisms for taking stock of progress, will allow national commitments to be strengthened in the coming years to achieve these more ambitious targets. Moreover the agreement provides for finance and other forms of support that will enable developing countries to play a full role in this regard.

The strengthened international support for the 1.5 degrees limit is a very welcome move, especially from the point of view of conserving and sustainably using biodiversity. Species and ecosystems around the world are already impacted by current global warming (of roughly 1 degree). Further impacts on biodiversity are inevitable with increases beyond this. The shift of ambition towards 1.5 degrees will make a big difference, particularly for the most vulnerable ecosystems such as coral reefs, mountains and polar ecosystems.

Critically, the decision adopted in Paris also calls for strengthened action in advance of 2020 to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. In this regard, the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achievement of its Aichi Biodiversity Targets will make a substantial contribution.

This is true for Aichi Target 5 (to at least half the rate of loss of natural habitats), Target 7 (to sustainably manage areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry), Target 10 (to reduce the multiple pressures on ecosystems, such as coral reefs, that are particularly vulnerable to climate change), Target 11 (to protect at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water and 10% of coastal and marine areas), and Target 15 (to enhance ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks including by restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems). Indeed, many INDCs contain commitments that will also contribute to these targets, through efforts to reduce deforestation and the loss of other natural habitats and to protect mangroves, coral reefs and other “natural infrastructure” that reduces impacts from climate-related extreme events.

These points of synergy underline that the protection of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems can and must be a major part of the world’s response to climate change, and, more broadly, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Paris Agreement is a tremendous achievement, and another great step taken by the world to support a sustainable future, a future of life in harmony with nature.



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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