



STATEMENT BY

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON ARTICLE 10 OF THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON
ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING**

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend to you all my warmest welcome to the offices of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. For many of you, this represents a long journey at a cold time of year, and we greatly appreciate your efforts to be here and your commitment to the Nagoya Protocol. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Governments of Belgium and Norway for their generous financial support to make this meeting possible.

As you are all aware, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising entered into force just over one year ago, on 12 October 2014. The Protocol supports the further implementation of one of the three objectives of the Convention: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources.

In October 2014, when the Protocol entered into force, it had 51 Parties, but the number of ratifications continues to grow, and the Protocol now has 70 Parties, with more ratifications expected in the coming months. Our objective is to reach 100 ratifications by the time of the second meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, which will be held in Cancun, Mexico, in December of this year.

The theme for the meetings in Mexico in December is “Integration of biodiversity for well-being”. This is linked to this year’s International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22nd when we will be celebrating biodiversity and its role in sustaining people and their livelihoods. ABS is an important component of this theme. Maintaining the diversity of our genetic resources and their associated traditional knowledge is critical to both the development of new products and services that can improve all our lives as well as to the people who already depend on genetic diversity and traditional knowledge for their day-to-day well-being. The equity dimension of access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in exchange for the sharing of benefits also holds great potential to contribute to sustainable development. This is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly last September. Both Goal 2 – on zero hunger – and Goal 15 – on addressing life on land – include targets that speak to access and benefit-sharing.

Distinguished participants,

Article 10 was one of the critical components that allowed the Nagoya Protocol to be adopted at COP-10, in 2010. Since then, it has been a key area of work as we prepared for entry into force of the Protocol. Some of you participated in the online discussions and the expert meeting that were held in 2013. Those discussions led to the adoption of decision NP-1/4 by the Parties to the Protocol at their first meeting in October 2014 and which provided the mandate for the work you are to undertake here this week.

It is no secret that the idea of a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism is a contentious one and views on the matter are very diverse. That being said, we need to make progress on this topic. So long as Article 10 remains an unresolved issue, it creates uncertainty, which is not conducive to the effective implementation of the Protocol, to the legal certainty, transparency and clarity that the Protocol was intended to promote or, indeed, to the creation of ABS agreements that support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

To this end, I urge you to approach this meeting as an opportunity to seek creative solutions. Although it may still be premature to agree on whether there is a need for a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism or on the modalities of such a mechanism, this meeting is an opportunity to explore outstanding issues in which a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism could possibly play a useful role. I am very confident that, with the expertise we have gathered here this week, we will be able to find ways forward that will allow us to complete this missing piece of the Nagoya Protocol.

With this in mind, I wish you a fruitful and successful meeting.