



**STATEMENT BY MR. BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**on the occasion of the  
EGYPTIAN FUNGUS DAY**

**20 February 2016**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to congratulate the Arab Society for Fungal Conservation for declaring 20 February as Egyptian Fungus Day. This initiative truly demonstrates commitment towards conservation of biodiversity and promoting the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Activities such as the celebration of Egyptian Fungus Day are crucial for raising awareness about the importance of conserving fungi and their contribution to the proper functioning of ecosystems and human well-being. Indeed, fungi provide essential ecosystem services. They play a vital role in the food web, nutrient and energy cycling, and long-term carbon sequestration in soil.

Despite their important value, fungi are often overlooked in both research and conservation efforts. Their contribution to healthy soils and ecosystems will become particularly crucial in the context of increasing pressures from climate change and other threats. Urgent attention is needed to increase knowledge and conservation of fungi.

In 2010, the Parties to the CBD adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Strategic Goals of the Plan aim to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use, improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity, enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services and enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building. The consideration of all of these elements is necessary to ensure that fungi are valued and protected.

I invite you to make use of the tools and guidance developed under the CBD, such as those available through the toolkit for the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation ([www.plants2020.net](http://www.plants2020.net)), available in all six official languages of the United Nations. While focusing on the plant kingdom, the Strategy invites Parties and other stakeholders to develop conservation strategies for other groups such as fungi. It thereby provides a framework which could be applied to the conservation of fungi as integral part of healthy ecosystems.

I would also like to draw your attention to the CBD's Global Taxonomy Initiative, which was created to address the lack of taxonomic information and infrastructure and declining taxonomic expertise. In fact, there is a shortage of fungal taxonomists and mycology is a field which requires much



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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more attention. This taxonomic impediment hinders our ability to make informed decisions about conservation and management of biodiversity. I believe that the Arab Society for Fungal Conservation and other partners, with activities such as Egyptian Fungus Day, can play an important role in increasing awareness, interest and support for research and conservation of fungi at the national and regional level.

Today is also an opportunity for Egypt to demonstrate strong leadership with regards to biodiversity given its unique role in documentation and conservation of fungi since ancient time. This positive spirit could serve to interest other countries in the region to follow the example set by your country.

Once again I would like to thank and congratulate you for your important initiative and I encourage you all to join the efforts of Parties worldwide in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Thank you for your kind attention.