



**STATEMENT BY**

**MR. BRAULIO F. DE SOUZA DIAS**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**at the opening of the**

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP**

**FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND WESTERN ASIA**

**ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

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**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

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*Excellency, Mrs. Stana Bozovic, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection,*

*Mr. Filip Radovic, Director of the Environment Protection Agency,*

*Distinguished National Focal Points and other Participants,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the *Regional Workshop for Central and Eastern Europe and Western Asia on the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM)*.

First of all, I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Serbia, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection and its Environment Protection Agency, for hosting this event in this beautiful city of Belgrade and for kindly and efficiently making all the necessary arrangements.

Second, I would like to thank the Government of Japan for its generous financial support which has allowed the Secretariat to convene this regional capacity-building workshop as part of its on-going support to developing country Parties for the establishment and strengthening of their national clearing-house mechanisms.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Biological diversity underpins ecosystem functioning and the provisioning of ecosystem services essential for human well-being. The importance of biodiversity as an integral part of sustainable development lies at the core of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. These targets, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010, lay out an ambitious agenda for achieving a future in which ecosystems are able to provide critical services that underpin planetary well-being, and in which the global community can sustainably and equitably benefit from biodiversity without impacting the ability of future generations to do so.

The fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, published in 2014, suggests that significant progress has been made towards meeting some components of most of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. However, indicators suggest that the status of biodiversity will continue to decline without urgent action.

To achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, business-as-usual approaches should be abandoned and biodiversity should be mainstreamed into development planning, resource mobilization, governance and decision-making. Through this process, Parties are expected to update their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, and adopt national targets aligned to the Aichi Targets.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In this context, national clearing-house mechanisms have a supporting role to play in identifying relevant information and knowledge and in making it accessible to those who need it. More specifically, national clearing-house mechanisms can be used to share information about national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and their implementation at the national level. In addition, national clearing-house mechanisms can be catalytic in engaging stakeholders and establishing partnerships.

Establishing and maintaining an effective national clearing-house mechanism is a challenging undertaking which is likely to occur step by step depending on available resources and capacity. The starting point for a country is to understand the benefits that it can gain from a national clearing-house mechanism, and to adopt a sound approach for its governance, development, and maintenance. This is the key to long-term effectiveness and sustainability, and it will be discussed during the workshop.

This workshop will also be the first one based on the new Bioland tool being developed by the Secretariat thanks to the support of the Japan Biodiversity Fund. The purpose of this tool is to overcome many of the barriers that Parties have been facing in the establishment of their national clearing-house mechanisms. The tool is essentially a basic generic national clearing-house mechanism that can be made available online to interested Parties for them to easily share key information related to their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and the corresponding implementation at the national level. As you will be the first participants making use of the Bioland tool, please keep in mind that your feedback will be extremely valuable to improve this tool and make it as effective as possible.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I sincerely hope that the workshop taking place this week will help you and also allow you to share experiences, learn from each other, and seek ways to collaborate on how to face joint challenges.

In conclusion, I wish you very productive discussions over the next few days and I look forward to further developments of your national clearing-house mechanisms as an effective platform to support the implementation of the Convention in your countries.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.