



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON
SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and to welcome you all back to Montreal.

As you have pointed out, Mr. Chairman, this meeting includes a number of agenda items that link it to the previous meeting, SBSTTA-19. This includes the consideration of mainstreaming of biodiversity across sectors. The documentation on this issue has benefited from the International Expert Workshop on Biodiversity Mainstreaming, held in Mexico City from 17 to 19 November 2015, as well as the peer review of the information papers prepared for SBSTTA-19. It also draws on the continuing support and extensive inputs from FAO, which you will find reflected in the recommendations on this agenda item.

Also on the agenda for this meeting is the consideration of key elements of a short-term action plan on ecosystem restoration. These elements, which have been prepared in response to the call from SBSTTA-19, have been developed in collaboration with many partners and aim to support the efforts of Parties and stakeholders to plan, implement and evaluate restoration activities as contributions towards the attainment of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 14 and 15 and other related commitments.

Another item carried over from SBSTTA-19 is the further consideration of the list of indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which was prepared by the AHTEG meeting held in September last year in Geneva, Switzerland. It has been revised as a result of the peer review called for by SBSTTA-19 and taking into account the outcomes of the forty-seventh session of the United Nations Statistical Commission based on the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators. In this context, I would also like to draw your attention to the work on a land degradation indicator jointly undertaken by the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the CBD Secretariat and FAO to provide an input to the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, the SDG restoration target as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 14 and 15. This work is in response to the call from the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UNCCD for a joint Rio convention indicator.

In addition to the issues carried over from the last meeting, SBSTTA has before it some elements that will be further considered by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its first meeting, next week.

For example, SBSTTA will consider progress in the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 12, drawing primarily on recent regional capacity-building workshops held in New Delhi in December and in Entebbe, Uganda, at the end of March following on the regional workshops held in Yanji, China, and Curitiba, Brazil, in September last year. Further progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5 and 15 will also be considered, the analysis of which has benefited from the results of the capacity-building workshop for Latin America held just three weeks ago in Bogotá, Colombia. These workshops involve intensive communication with the participating countries and the preparation of country dossiers leading to the formulation of road maps for the achievement of the respective Aichi Biodiversity Targets. I am co-signing together with the Minister for the Environment of the host Government, letters to all environment ministers to emphasize the critical importance of this engagement in advancing the

implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. In addition to this detailed information on selected targets, SBI at its upcoming meeting will consider progress towards all 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, based on the 173 fifth national reports that were available in time for the analysis.

Similarly, SBSTTA is invited to consider the guidelines for the sixth national report from a scientific and technical perspective and to transmit these observations to SBI, which will be invited to prepare a recommendation for COP-13 on the matter.

While there are a number of other issues on the agenda of this meeting of SBSTTA, allow me to highlight just three more.

On marine and coastal biodiversity, the process to describe ecologically or biologically significant marine areas – or EBSAs – has continued, and the most recent regional workshop, covering the Seas of East Asia, was held in December in Xiamen, China. As a result of the EBSA process, about three quarters of the world's ocean area has been considered, and 286 areas meeting the EBSA criteria have been described. SBSTTA also presented with practical options for further enhancing scientific methodologies and approaches on the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria and a proposed way to consider them. In addition to EBSAs, SBSTTA will be invited to consider a workplan on biodiversity and acidification in cold water areas, technical studies on marine debris and anthropogenic underwater noise, the outcomes of an expert workshop to provide consolidated practical guidance, a toolkit for marine spatial planning and an update on training and partnership activities within the framework of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative.

You also have before you the synthesis report on experiences with ecosystem-based approaches for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. This report is the result of effective collaboration with international, regional and national organizations that contributed significantly to its development. The report presents a broad overview of the current state of knowledge on ecosystem-based approaches for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Some draft recommendations from this report are presented to SBSTTA for deliberation.

Lastly, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, the fourth Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, or IPBES, approved the Summary for Policymakers and the chapters of the report on the thematic assessment of pollinators, pollination and food production and of the methodological assessments of scenarios and models. Both of these assessments are highly relevant to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the review of progress and the analysis of future options to achieve the vision of the Strategic Plan. They are also significant in being the first tangible products from the IPBES process and demonstrate the ability of IPBES to deliver high-quality results of great value to the Convention process and to SBSTTA, and this is recognized in the documentation you have before you.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no need for me to list all the items on the agenda for this meeting or to emphasize the challenge of such a packed agenda. Rather, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your colleagues in the SBSTTA Bureau for your leadership in shaping this meeting. I am

certain that, under your guidance and that of the other members of the Bureau, our discussions here over the coming days will come to a successful conclusion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Australia, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland for providing financial resources to support the participation of representatives of least developed countries, small island developing States and/or indigenous peoples and local communities. As we all understand, the full participation of Parties and stakeholders is essential to move the Convention process forward in a meaningful and unified manner.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The functional review of the Secretariat has been completed, and the report is available for discussion at SBI-1. The new structure of the Secretariat promotes better integration and cross-sectoral coordination across the units you have become accustomed to. I have established a Division on Scientific and Policy Support, which includes the thematic scientific work of the former Science, Assessment and Monitoring Division, with units on biosafety and invasive alien species, ABS and traditional knowledge and Conservation and Sustainable Use. This division will collaborate in a cross-cutting manner with the one supporting mainstreaming and outreach on the one hand and the one supporting implementation on the other. I am convinced that this new structure is well suited to providing you with the best possible support, and you may note that certain agenda items at this meeting are being serviced by colleagues from the biosafety and ABS teams.

In the context of the changes to the Secretariat, and in accordance with decision XII/32, I have appointed Mr. David Cooper as Deputy Executive Secretary. I am certain that his appointment will further strengthen coordination and coherence in the work of the Secretariat.

I also wish to take this opportunity to inform you that this will be my last SBSTTA meeting as Executive Secretary. I have informed the Executive Director of UNEP, Achim Steiner, that I will not seek an extension of my mandate for personal reasons and I have requested the Executive Director to start the process for recruiting my successor. However, let me assure you that I will continue to lead the Secretariat with the utmost commitment and devotion until the end of my term, in February 2017.

With this, I wish you successful deliberations, and, as always, the Secretariat stands ready to support you.

Thank you.
