



STATEMENT BY

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**FIRST MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON
IMPLEMENTATION**

2-6 MAY 2016

MONTREAL, CANADA



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Mr. President, Minister Saint-Pierre, Mr. Basile van Havre,
Distinguished delegates, friends and colleagues,

This is a historic day in the life of our Convention on Biological Diversity for two reasons. First, we open the first meeting of this body, the Subsidiary Body on Implementation. Second, the Secretariat celebrates 20 years in this beautiful and diverse city of Montreal.

I am honoured to welcome Minister Christine Saint-Pierre, Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie of Quebec, and Mr. Basile van Havre, head of delegation for Canada and the Director General of Domestic and International Biodiversity Policy at Environment and Climate Change Canada. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Governments of Canada and Quebec for their continued excellent support in hosting the Secretariat in Montreal over these 20 years. I also have the pleasure to invite you all to join the reception sponsored by Canada this evening to celebrate this important anniversary.

These 20 years have witnessed 27 major meetings of the subsidiary bodies, including preparatory sessions for the Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols, bringing about 14,000 participants to the city of Montreal. Meanwhile, the Secretariat has grown from a core staff of 31 to 72 and we have benefited from increased financial support from Governments, especially those of Canada and Quebec.

Over these 20 years, the Convention has agreed on comprehensive thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work. It has adopted two protocols and a supplementary protocol, and, numerous principles and guidelines, including the Ecosystem Approach, which is now widely applied around the world. Moreover, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, adopted in Nagoya in 2010, has been formally recognized as the global biodiversity framework across the United Nations system, for all the biodiversity-related conventions and for major non-governmental organizations, and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and related indicators are the focus for action on biodiversity worldwide.

The United Nations General Assembly declared this decade, from 2011 until 2020, the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity and has also recognized the important role of biodiversity in its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, which integrates the Aichi Targets. The role of ecosystems in reducing vulnerabilities is recognized in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the role of forests and other ecosystems, including oceans, in providing mitigation and adaptation to climate change is recognized in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the need to reduce degradation and enhance restoration of degraded ecosystems has been reinforced by the recent decision by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to adopt a goal on land degradation neutrality. The Convention itself has near-universal participation with 196 Parties.

We can safely conclude that the Convention on Biological Diversity has been very successful in consolidating the international framework for biodiversity as well as the national frameworks for biodiversity (through national biodiversity strategies and action plans and related provisions) in all countries and has facilitated the establishment of biodiversity strategies and

action plans in many provinces and cities around the world. It has also consolidated itself as one of the most progressive intergovernmental forums for protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. It has been a pioneer in adopting a gender action plan among environmental conventions, has encouraged the establishment of national or regional business and biodiversity initiatives in many countries and subregions, and has motivated the creation and consolidation of several partner global organizations, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

However, as we are all aware, despite these impressive achievements, implementation at the national level remains a challenge. After agreeing on almost 367 decisions in the past 20 years, we would naturally shift our focus towards the way to overcome obstacles encountered in implementing the Convention, its Protocols and the strategic plans adopted under it.

The establishment of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation gives us a new tool to advance implementation and support the Conference of the Parties in its overall task of keeping under review the implementation of the Convention, as required under Article 23, paragraph 4.

Delegates,

Under agenda item 4, we will review progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. In the related agenda items 5 and 6, we will consider progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 16 on the Nagoya Protocol and on the assessment of review of effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol and mid-term evaluation of its strategic plan.

The review of the Strategic Plan is based on two sources of information, the national biodiversity strategies and action plans, which relate to targets and commitments by Parties, and the national reports, which highlight actions and outcomes. A total of 67 Parties submitted their revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans by the 2015 deadline, and 20 additional national biodiversity strategies and action plans were submitted by 30 April 2016, giving a total of 87. This represents approximately 45 per cent of the Parties to the Convention. The result on the fifth national reports is much more encouraging, as 180 Parties have submitted their national reports to date, a record for the number of national reports submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Parties that have formulated national targets related to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets need to be congratulated for their important work, but I also need to flag that, overall, the level of ambition in national targets is insufficient, and, if this trend is reflected in the remaining national biodiversity strategies and action plans still to be submitted, we will not be able to meet the global targets collectively agreed in Nagoya in 2010. It is with great concern that we have to note that Aichi Biodiversity Target 17 was not met by the target date of 2015.

The information from these assessments is broadly consistent with the information presented in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, which concluded that, while progress is being made towards the achievement of all targets, it is not currently sufficient to

achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and that additional action is required to keep the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 on course. This brings me to other agenda items that deal with possible actions that can be taken by Parties to enhance implementation in the next five years to achieve the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and of the mechanisms to facilitate this.

The challenge of mainstreaming biodiversity in sectors and across sectors is a major strategic action for strengthening implementation and will be addressed under agenda item 7. Mainstreaming will be a key focus of the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Cancun later this year, including its high-level segment. Our work this week will build upon work of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its nineteenth and twentieth meetings, the latter having completed its work two days ago, focusing on mainstreaming in the agriculture, forests, fisheries and aquaculture sectors. It will also draw upon an international workshop hosted last year by Mexico with the support of Switzerland.

Items related to capacity-building, scientific and technical cooperation and the clearing-house mechanism will be addressed under item 8 of the agenda. This will include the review of a draft short-term action plan for capacity-building prepared by the Secretariat.

Delegates,

As another means of implementation, in Pyeongchang you had adopted a number of targets for resource mobilization, revised the reporting framework, and decided on some related actions. Under agenda item 9, we will examine progress on these activities. The analysis of progress is only preliminary since, to date, the Secretariat has received reports using the agreed reporting framework from only 36 Parties. I urge others to submit theirs by the end of July to enable a meaningful review of progress at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Agenda item 10 deals with the financial mechanism of the Convention, and, for the first time, the Council of the Global Environment Facility has made available in advance a preliminary draft report for your consideration; the final report will be submitted as usual to the Conference of the Parties. This agenda item also includes the draft report of a full assessment of the funds needed for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, as well as requests related to the other biodiversity-related conventions, for the seventh replenishment period of the Global Environment Facility. I would like to express my appreciation to the GEF Secretariat and the team of five experts who carried out this assessment, as well as Japan and the European Union, which provided the necessary financial support. The assessment used a bottom-up approach seeking inputs from Parties through a questionnaire. I would like to thank the 45 Parties which contributed in this way and urge the remaining Parties to kindly take the time to submit the questionnaire as soon as possible to enable a complete assessment to be considered at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. To assist you in doing so, the expert team has made itself available at this meeting, and you can contact them at their desk, which is clearly marked in the plenary. At the same desk, you will also find our secretariat staff, who can provide similar assistance related to the completion of the financial reporting framework.

The Secretariat relies on collaboration with other entities and partners to carry out its work and has been taking many steps to make such collaboration more effective. Within the United Nations system, the Secretariat partners frequently not only with UNEP, but also with UNDP, FAO, the World Bank, UNESCO and members of the Biodiversity Liaison Group, which includes the heads of the seven global biodiversity-related conventions.

At its twelfth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision XII/6, a unique decision which created a Party-led process for enhancing synergies among the global biodiversity conventions, including a consideration of what Parties themselves might undertake at the national level. With the generous financial support of the Governments of Finland and Switzerland, a workshop was organized to prepare options for action. These will be considered under agenda item 11.

The issue of synergies among conventions is also a matter that will be taken up at the second meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP later this month. Parties will wish to consider ways to strengthen synergies in these various contexts, and to bear in mind the work being undertaken by each body.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This meeting is tasked to develop the modus operandi of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, and thus we have a unique opportunity to design the course this new Subsidiary Body will take in the years to come. The proposed modus operandi set out in the documents before you includes approaches for improving how we review the implementation of the Convention with the overall goal of enhancing progress at all levels to achieve the three objectives of the Convention.

Thanks to the financial support provided by the Government of Switzerland, a workshop was held in Bogis-Bossey to explore, in an informal setting, different approaches that could be taken to enhance the review of the implementation of the Convention. As reported to you in an information document, the meeting examined the experiences of other intergovernmental bodies, such as UNFCCC and OECD, as well as national experiences and the experience within our Convention and Protocols, including the new voluntary peer review of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. We will have the opportunity to benefit from some short presentations on these experiences on Wednesday morning.

Lastly, let me point out that, to strengthen and streamline the work from your Secretariat in order to better support the Parties, I have conducted an in-depth functional review of the Secretariat, in consultation with the Executive Director of UNEP, as per decisions XI/31 and XII/32 of the Conference of the Parties.

The first step of the functional review was the development of a Secretariat-wide Medium-term Operational Results Framework for the period up to the year 2020. This was developed by management in consultation with staff, taking into account an analysis of tasks mandated for the Secretariat by decisions of the Conference of the Parties. The framework is

composed of a vision, a mission statement for the remainder of the Decade on Biodiversity and six operational goals of Secretariat functions.

The second step was the organizational design of the Secretariat. Traditionally, the structure of the Secretariat and many of its activities have been organized primarily along the lines of the substantive programmes of work of the Convention and of the Protocols. While these remain important, over the years, more emphasis has been given to activities and mechanisms that cut cross these substantive programmes, such as capacity-building. The new structure gives more attention to these “horizontal” areas of work, allowing for more effective institutional learning and the more efficient use of scarce human and financial resources. It also helps to better integrate work on the Convention and the Protocols. The issue of administration of the Convention is also a matter that will be taken up at the second meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP later this month.

Mr. President,

Let me end by thanking the Governments of Australia, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland for providing funds to support the participation of representatives of least developed countries, small island developing States, other developing countries and countries with economies in transition, as well as indigenous peoples and local communities. This support is essential to ensuring broad participation in the Convention’s decision-making process.

With that, I wish you a successful meeting and look forward to providing all necessary support to ensure smooth operations and negotiations in the next five days.

Thank you.
