



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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE FIFTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER
COUNCIL AND ASSOCIATED SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEES**

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address the Fifty-second Session of the International Tropical Timber Council, and Associated Sessions of the Committees, today in the city of Yokohama.

For the past two decades and a half, the CBD and ITTO Secretariats have been working towards a constructive partnership that supports its member countries to define and apply measures and the means to meet common objectives to conserve and sustainably manage tropical forest biodiversity. In practical terms, this working relationship consolidated its efforts through the implementation of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity adopted in 2010.

Since then, the Joint Initiative has mobilized significant resources from various donors, and leveraged political interest and technical capacity to adopt, a holistic, inclusive and integrated approach to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in the planning and implementation of its projects.

By focusing on the common objectives of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 and the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, in particular the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Initiative and its projects have helped to foster cross-sectoral cooperation between biodiversity and forestry experts, investing in local actions and local capital.

With biodiversity at the center of this Initiative, CBD Secretariat's contributions have largely focused on ensuring that project proposals clearly and explicitly refer to the following criteria: First) how sustainable forest management (SFM) practices support forest aspects of the Aichi Targets; 2) the types of impacts on biodiversity and livelihoods generated; 3) existing benchmarks and parameters to track project deliverables; and 4) the identification of national data that can complement CBD reporting requirements.

This focus has helped to enhance CBD's work on mainstreaming biodiversity in forestry, associated with several Aichi Targets, and to identify criteria and performance standards for projects to ensure ecosystem integrity and biodiversity implications at the national level.

Such information, has also contributed to further work under the expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity, and could provide input to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and its related targets on forests, as well as other relevant commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the preparation towards the UN Strategic Plan on Forests.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me make a special reference to three flagship projects with which the CBD Secretariat has been actively involved:

1) The "Management of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex to Promote Cooperation for Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation between Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)" has generated an array of outputs, ranging from management plans that integrates research results on species and ecological processes; strengthened stakeholder capacity to undertake monitoring on biodiversity criteria; and local

communities' empowerment to improve their livelihoods while reducing dependence from protected area resources.

Through collective efforts, a common vision has been developed for the long-term management of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex. Such a vision has helped to strengthen the protection of the transboundary habitats of wide-ranging wildlife species and increase their adaptability to land use and climate change. The importance of this transboundary project cannot be overstated in a region where few intact forests remain to enable large endangered mammals to exist. The contribution of this projects extends to several CBD programmatic activities, including on genetic resources, protected areas and sustainable wildlife management, among others.

2) The “Integrated Management of Natural Resources and Biodiversity in the Tacaná Volcano and its Range of Influence in Mexico and Guatemala”, presents another stellar example. The project has contributed to the improvement of the livelihoods of nearly 28,000 people living in both countries, through the conservation and sustainable use of local natural resources.

It has defined pilot areas for the restoration and conservation of Tacaná Volcano border areas in a participatory manner; identified and established local production and economic initiatives enhancing local livelihoods; updated technical and legal frameworks for integrated management; and, moreover, local communities, municipal councils and public agencies are involved in bilateral cooperation. The importance of cross-sectoral coordination at the national level is well understood, and knowledge exchange between the two countries is occurring with regards to the implementation of several Aichi Targets, namely Targets 5, 7, 14, 15, and 18.

3) The “Institutional strengthening of the member countries of ACTO in comprehensive and sustainable management of forests for environmentally responsible forest management and biodiversity conservation in the Amazons, with emphasis on the controlled forests (ITTO - CBD - ACTO)”, facilitates knowledge exchanges and replicates experiences on sustainable forest management models in the context of conservation between countries of the Amazon Basin.

This project has already received significant engagement from ACTO member countries through the nomination of national coordinators and country management teams, as well as the recruitment of consultants to gather examples of best practices at the national scale and identify regional centers of excellence for capacity-building activities using the project outputs.

In the next phases of the project, training modules are planned and will be made available on an online knowledge-sharing platform. ACTO countries' representatives at the last project meeting in May 2016 also expressed their intention to make this online platform become a more permanent repository of information on sustainable forest management and on its impact on biodiversity. The potential exists to turn this into an information hub for reporting to the Convention on progress and efforts at the regional scale under Aichi Biodiversity Target 7 (on the sustainable management of forests) and other forest-related targets.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The involvement of the CBD Secretariat under this initiative, and the different projects it supports, is coherent with its wider expanded programme of work on forests. As part of the implementation of the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (or FERI) which is implemented by the CBD Secretariat and funded by the Korea Forest Service, there is a concrete opportunity to further enhance collaboration on the ground, testing guidelines and tools, building national inter-

institutional networks and offering additional technical support to devise options and means for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in tropical forests.

In this regard, allow me to note that a short term action plan on ecosystem restoration will be considered for adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting to be held from 2-17 December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico. The Plan provides a flexible framework for action on ecosystem restoration, and can serve to inform and report on the outputs of future projects under the Joint Initiative.

In closing, let me take this moment to wish the Council members a productive meeting, and encourage you to continue your support to the ITTO-CBD Joint Initiative, including through financial contributions to advance biodiversity considerations, including ecological resilience, genetic diversity and connectivity, so to improve the outlook for tropical timber production in the future.

Thank you for your attention and to the ITTO Secretariat for its continued collaboration and strong partnership with the CBD.