



STATEMENT BY

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

at the closing of the

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE

2016 UNITED NATIONS BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE

*Thirteenth meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity
Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the
Cartagena Protocol
Second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the
Nagoya Protocol*

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Excellency Mr. Rafael Pacchiano Alamán, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico,

Excellencies and heads of delegations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are reaching the end of the high-level segment of this United Nations Biodiversity Conference and approaching the beginning of the Conference itself. When our Mexican hosts first brought up the idea, many of us wondered about the wisdom of holding the high-level segment ahead of the negotiating sessions. Many of us had doubts that it would be possible to bring Ministers responsible for agriculture, environment, fisheries, forests, and tourism together to the same meeting. Some of us may even have wondered whether we could really make advances on these issues, when they have been around for decades with limited progress.

Excellencies, I want to convey to you, your counterparts responsible for the other sectors and your respective teams our strongest congratulations and appreciation for having had this vision, and for making these two days so successful. There were excellent discussions going on throughout the last two days, with ministers bringing different perspectives, but always solutions. The heads of agencies in the United Nations who are responsible for these various issues have also come together as a result of this process, and you have also worked hard to mainstream biodiversity in their own governing bodies and discussions.

And, moreover, Mexico has led us by example. I am pleased for you — and I am pleased for all of us, that your hard work has paid off.

Not only has this meeting led to tangible outcomes — the Cancun Declaration, the reports from the four round-table discussions, and pledges and commitments to enhance implementation and mainstreaming — but I am convinced that these along with the constructive attitude across different sectors will pave the way for a successful process over the coming two weeks. Indeed, I believe we have begun to break down language barriers — not those between our different mother tongues but those between the different mother tongues we use in our respective sectoral silos. Understanding each other — our common goals as well as our different perspectives and priorities — is the first step towards developing the approaches that bring us forward collectively.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We had exchanges and heard views from different sectors. We have listened to the wisdom of indigenous peoples and local communities. We have heard about the hopes and the fears of the youth. We have heard about the importance of science. We have learned about the constructive role that the business sector can play. We have heard how cities and subnational governments are often at the forefront of these issues. We have discovered that, in the end, we all want the same thing: a healthy planet that provides for our needs and those of future generations.

Let us use the outcomes of this high-level segment to find ways to overcome our differences and use the Conference over the coming two weeks to prepare the ground for the transformation that is needed to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Sustainable Development Goals and our long-term vision of living in harmony with nature.

Thank you.