



OPENING STATEMENT BY

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

to 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*

**Cancun, Mexico
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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Mr. Rafael Pacchiano Alamán, Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico and President of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties,

Mr. Chun Kyoo Park, Director-General of the Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, representing the Presidency of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties,

Ms. Cristiana Pasca-Palmer, Minister of Environment of Romania, and my successor as Executive Secretary of CBD,

Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director of Environment,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, here in Cancun, Mexico.

I sincerely thank the President of the Conference of the Parties and his team for the tremendous efforts they have undertaken in planning for this United Nations Biodiversity Conference, with the theme of “Mainstreaming biodiversity for well-being”. I also thank the Province of Quintana Roo and the City of Cancun for the warm hospitality we have received.

Since the decision on the host of this conference was taken two years ago, Mexico has demonstrated exceptional leadership on advancing the biodiversity agenda, both domestically (for example through Mexico’s recently adopted National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2030 and commitments to meet Aichi Target 11 ahead of schedule) and internationally (for example through active engagement in international and intergovernmental processes, particularly the negotiations of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, and in the FAO committees on agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

We need to follow through on the decisions we have taken, and undertake all necessary efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by the end of this decade. A positive sign in this regard is that over 93 per cent of Parties have submitted their fifth national reports — although the large majority of these reports were received after the deadline and therefore not reflected in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*. We have to do better than that with our sixth national reports.

The same applies to the updating of NBSAPs. In spite of the commitment made in 2010, only approximately 69 per cent of Parties have undertaken the process to align their NBSAP with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. I am also concerned that only a quarter of these can be recognized as “whole-of-government” policy instruments and few contain resource mobilization strategies, communication and public awareness strategies, and capacity development strategies. Also, few NBSAPs confirm that biodiversity is being significantly mainstreamed in cross-sectoral plans and policies, poverty eradication policies, or sustainable development plans.

On the agenda for this meeting, you will consider mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors, under the strategic actions to enhance implementation of the Strategic Plan,

building on the work already undertaken at SBSTTA-19, SBSTTA-20 and SBI-1. The draft decision benefits from the support of FAO, including work undertaken in FAO's committees on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and on the process to prepare the report on the *State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*. I would like to thank FAO for all of its support.

In this context, the agenda also includes consideration of the implications of the IPBES assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production, complemented by a regional report for Africa on this subject as requested by SBSTTA-20. Restoration is another area that requires the participation of all partners, and a common and coherent approach. The short-term action plan on ecosystem restoration should facilitate our work on the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 15, and corresponding national targets and pledges in this area.

Moving to the marine realm, the issues under consideration including in particular on EBSAs — ecologically or biologically significant marine areas — and on marine spatial planning and training have benefited from participation and contributions from the fisheries management community as well as marine biodiversity experts to bring together the data and information needed to describe EBSAs or to undertake scientifically sound spatial planning. The *Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets*, held at the end of September in Seoul, Republic of Korea, under the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, is a demonstration of the progress in bringing different stakeholders together in a concerted effort to sustainably manage the marine environment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

An important topic for your consideration is item 11 on resource mobilization and the financial mechanism. As you know, the Conference of the Parties at its last meeting adopted ambitious targets for resource mobilization, and the present meeting will look at the progress achieved and consider the need for further action.

I was pleased to note from the latest update on financial reports received that those countries that were already able to submit 2015 numbers did collectively overachieve the target to double international biodiversity-related financial flows to developing countries. While the figures are not yet final and maintaining this level until 2020 is obviously an outstanding challenge, I believe that this achievement already provides a strong positive note for your deliberations in the coming two weeks. I also noted with concern that implementation seems to be lagging on some of the other targets for resource mobilization, in particular those related to the identification of funding needs and gaps, and to the development of national finance plans, and I look forward to a strong message from the Conference of the Parties on how best to intensify our collective efforts to maintain the progress already achieved and meet the other targets.

On the financial mechanism, you are well aware that, next year, Governments will start negotiations towards the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund. In anticipation of the replenishment, this Conference of the Parties will provide strategic guidance to the financial mechanism through the four-year outcome-oriented framework of programme priorities as well as additional guidance, taking into account the progress reported by the Global Environment Facility and submissions from biodiversity-related conventions. The Conference will also determine funding requirements based on the full report of the expert team that was established to undertake the assessment of funds needed to implement the Convention

and its Protocols during the GEF-7 period. These items will be critical in delivering effective guidance and input to your counterparts who will undertake the GEF-7 replenishment negotiations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this 2016 United Nations Biodiversity Conference, we have three meetings taking place concurrently. While we had a glimpse of concurrent meetings during the second week of the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Pyeongchang, the agenda of this Conference, with three distinct meetings interwoven, demonstrates the enhanced integration of the Convention and its two Protocols. You will have noted that related issues are placed in proximity so that discussions under one instrument inform those under the others. This integration is also reflected in the gradual transformation of the Secretariat, supported by the analysis for the functional review, into a single synergistic team that can respond to related issues across the three instruments.

With respect to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Parties will consider the mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan in conjunction with the third assessment and review of the effectiveness of the Cartagena Protocol. The results of the third national reports show that significant progress towards the objective of the Strategic Plan has been made in areas such as the Biosafety-Clearing House. On the other hand, the implementation of other key Protocol issues needs to be strengthened, such as capacity-building on risk assessment, unintentional transboundary movements and socio-economic considerations.

As one of the key implementation tools of the Cartagena Protocol, the Biosafety-Clearing House continues to be fully supported by Parties as the primary means for the exchange of information, knowledge and experience in biosafety. The content of the information contained in the Biosafety-Clearing House continues to improve, both in terms of quantity and quality, and the number of visits by users has doubled during the last two years. The Secretariat, under the guidance of the Informal Advisory Committee, continues to improve various aspects of the Biosafety-Clearing House in order to ensure that its content is complete, up-to-date and relevant.

At this meeting, Parties will also deliberate on several other issues that are essential to the effective implementation of the Cartagena Protocol. They will consider an improved version of the Guidance on Risk Assessment aimed at assisting countries in conducting risk assessments in a scientifically sound manner. In an example of how the integration among the three instruments is already happening in practice, the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol will also address, in coordination with the Conference of the Parties, the issue of synthetic biology.

I am pleased to report that we are nearing the required number of ratifications for the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to enter into force. The Supplementary Protocol has received 37 ratifications to date, and 4 more ratifications are required for its entry into force. I call upon other Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to expedite their internal processes and to deposit their instrument of ratification as soon as possible, with a view to ensuring the expeditious entry into force of the Supplementary Protocol.

With regard to the Nagoya Protocol, we have now reached 91 ratifications from all regions, with the latest by the Governments of Cameroon and Malta, which is a clear demonstration of worldwide support for the Nagoya Protocol. In addition, the process towards

ratification is under way in at least 36 countries. A number of Governments have also taken important steps to implement the Nagoya Protocol, and I wish to thank them for their perseverance and dedication in making the Nagoya Protocol a reality on the ground.

However, further efforts are still needed to make the Nagoya Protocol fully operational. Indeed, many Parties to the Protocol still need to establish institutional structures and legislative, administrative or policy measures for implementing the Nagoya Protocol. Capacity-building and financial resources continue to be essential for this purpose, and we count on the support of partners and donors.

Considerable progress was made over the past biennium in further refining the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, which plays a key role in making the Protocol operational by providing users with information on procedures for access, and by monitoring the utilization of genetic resources and supporting compliance with the access and benefit-sharing requirements of provider countries. In this regard, I am pleased to note that, over the past few months, a number of national records have been made available on the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House by Parties, non-Parties and stakeholders. In particular, it is worth noting that 50 internationally recognized certificates of compliance have already been constituted, following information made available to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House by Guatemala, India, Mexico and South Africa. I wish to thank these countries for paving the way, and I hope that many more will follow in the weeks and months ahead to demonstrate that the Nagoya Protocol is a reality on the ground and can contribute to monitoring the utilization of genetic resources.

At this meeting, Parties to the Nagoya Protocol will address several issues of key importance to implementation, including: progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 16, the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, the implementation of the awareness-raising strategy adopted at the first meeting of the Parties, capacity-building and development to support the implementation of the Protocol, guidance to the financial mechanism, cooperation with other organizations and initiatives working on issues related to access and benefit-sharing, and compliance with the Protocol.

The second meeting of the Parties is also expected to provide a way forward regarding outstanding issues, such as the need for and modalities of a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism, and to agree on a process for the assessment and review of the Protocol to be carried out at the third meeting of the Parties, in 2018.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As usual, there are also a number of different parallel and side events that will contribute substantially to the outcomes of this meeting. Running in parallel with the main meeting are the Rio Conventions Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion, the Communication, Education and Public Awareness Fair, the Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments, the Civil Society and Youth Alliances event on biodiversity mainstreaming for human well-being and the Summit Muuch'tambal on Indigenous Experience, linking traditional knowledge, biodiversity and cultural diversity. A number of events have already taken place, including the Science Forum and the Business and Biodiversity Forum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In closing, I would like take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the Governments of Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, which have provided generous financial support to ensure that 129 participants from developing countries as well as indigenous peoples and local communities are able to attend this conference. I thank them for their active and continued support for the Convention. In this connection, I am pleased to inform you that 6,400 participants have pre-registered for this meeting.

With this, I wish you the best of luck in your deliberations in the next two weeks, and I reiterate our deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for presiding over the work since the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the Government of Mexico for hosting this meeting in such a beautiful and relaxing atmosphere.

Thank you very much for your attention.
