



STATEMENT BY

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of the

CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AWARD CEREMONY

at the margins of the

UNITED NATIONS BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Distinguished Delegates, National Focal Points, and other Participants,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this first *Clearing-House Mechanism Award Ceremony*.

At the twelfth Conference of the Parties (COP 12), when the Parties requested me, through decision to XII/2 B, to propose a process to grant an award to the Parties that have made the most significant progress in the establishment or further development of their national clearing-house mechanisms, it was clear that the intent was to recognize the important efforts made so far by many Parties in this area, and to encourage all of them to further develop these national clearing-house mechanisms.

At the same time, this request has been an opportunity to remind Parties of the supporting role of national clearing-house mechanisms in the implementation of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, as indicated in goal 2 of the mission, goals and objectives of the clearing-house mechanism, as adopted in decision X/15.

This award was a new type of request for me and my staff, and initially, we were not too sure how to proceed with it. Fortunately, I received good advice from the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM-IAC) which had established a small working group to assist me in carrying out this request. With their support, we established the modalities for the CHM Award process which were sent to all Parties through notification 2015-068 issued in June 2015.

These modalities explained that there would be two categories of award: one for Parties that had established their national CHMs before COP 12; and one for Parties that would establish their national CHMs between COP 12 and COP 13. In each category, three awards would be granted: the gold award for the winner; the silver award for the second position; and the bronze award for the third position. These modalities also indicated that I would establish a regionally-balanced jury and that two questionnaires would be sent to Parties to assess their progress between 1st July 2015 and 30th June 2016. The first questionnaire was attached to this notification, and the second questionnaire was sent in June 2016. It was necessary to specify an end date of 30th June 2016 in order to give sufficient time to the jury to review the applications.

The next step for me was to establish the regionally-balanced jury. Given that the CHM-IAC was already a regionally-balanced group, we kindly asked for volunteers among them. I am grateful that several CHM-IAC members accepted this responsibility, knowing in advance that it would have significant implications on their time. I am also very grateful to Mr. John Tayleur of UNEP-WCMC, who kindly accepted to be a jury member on a purely voluntary basis, given that the Secretariat had no funding to support this initiative. Needless to say, the modalities clearly stated that a Jury member being a Party could not assess its own national Clearing-House Mechanism.

Then, the process went on. The questionnaires were sent, responses were received and compiled by my staff, and distributed to the jury who reviewed them. Last month, the jury provided me with their final ranking and determined the three CHM award winners in each category. While I was happy to see the excellent achievements of the winners, I found that limiting the outcome to only six Parties was, in my view, too restrictive given the significant achievements of many other Parties with respect to the establishment or further development of their national clearing-house mechanisms. I felt that the Parties that had not won an award but were ranked in the top-10 of each category deserved a token of recognition for their efforts, and this is why I decided to grant a certificate of achievement to each of them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is an important day for the CHM as a network facilitating cooperation and knowledge sharing on biodiversity. This CHM award initiative has given the opportunity to learn more about what each other does on its national CHM. I am particularly pleased that virtually every participating country has answered yes to the question asking them whether they accept to share the information provided through the questionnaires. This will allow my staff to extract the information you provided and package it as success stories and best practices for the further development of the CHM network.

In conclusion, we can say that this first round of the CHM award process has been quite successful, and I am confident the forthcoming rounds at COP 14 and COP 15 will build on this momentum while further motivating Parties to make their national CHM as effective as possible in supporting the implementation of their NBSAPs.

Without further ado, I stop here to allow the ceremony to continue in order for you to know who the winners are. But before this, let me congratulate the Parties that have won a CHM award or earned a certificate of achievement, and give a round of applaud to all those who have worked hard for strengthening the clearing-house mechanism.

Thank you very much for your attention.