



**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE FIFTH MEDITERRANEAN FOREST WEEK “TOWARDS AN ENHANCED REGIONAL COOPERATION TO RESTORE MEDITERRANEAN LANDSCAPES: IMPROVING RESILIENCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT”, AGADIR, MOROCCO, 24 MARCH 2017**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address this High Level Segment of the fifth Mediterranean Forest Week on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ms Cristiana Pasca Palmer.

The focus of work this week "towards an enhanced regional cooperation to restore Mediterranean landscapes: improving ecosystem resilience for the benefit of people and the environment.", directly supports the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, its Aichi Biodiversity targets and the 2050 Vision of “living in harmony with nature”

At the recent United Nations Biodiversity Conference in, Cancun, Mexico, 2016, Ministers of environment, agriculture and forestry, among others, came together and adopted the Cancun Declaration on “Mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for well-being”.

The ministers of these sectors declared their concern with the degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems, unsustainable land use and other pressures that have negative impacts on biodiversity.

They also declared that biodiversity offers solutions to the pressing development and societal challenges that the world community is currently facing.

They committed to work together, across sectors, among other things to promote the conservation and, where necessary, the restoration of ecosystems as a basis for



achieving good health, clean water, food security and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Mediterranean region is a cradle of civilization and of agriculture as well as being one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. In this region, natural ecosystems have supported human development for a very long time; but also faced the pressures from that development.

It is therefore not surprising that this is a priority region for ecosystem restoration.

The Agadir Declaration -- that you are committing to today- is a major step in putting the Mediterranean Region on the path of restoration.

This investment in biodiversity and in ecosystems will be an essential part of this region's efforts to mitigate climate change, to adapt to its unavoidable impacts and to reduce the risks from disasters. It will be essential to protecting the rich and unique biodiversity of the region. It will be essential to guaranteeing water security and food security. In turn, it will be essential to fostering peace and security more generally.

Such investments must draw upon the knowledge and ingenuity of the peoples of region, including farmers, foresters and pastoralists, which also has been acquired over millennia.

It has been an honour for the Secretariat of the Convention to be a member of the organizing committee for this week, working closely with FAO. We would also like to thank the hosts, Morocco for hosting this week, building on the success of COP-22 and the Marrakech Action Proclamation.

We are pleased that we have had the opportunity to organize this week, through the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative, training sessions on tools and best practices in support of ecosystem conservation and restoration, putting into practice the short term action plan on ecosystem restoration adopted in Cancun.

We hope that the roadmaps developed through these training sessions will help countries make a fast start to implementing the Agadir Declaration, and to achieving the goals not only of the Convention on Biodiversity, but also those of the Climate Change and Desertification Conventions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Thank you.