



CBD

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

STATEMENT

by

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

to the

THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Addressing a ceremony held earlier this year to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Brundtland report, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway, stated:

“The Brundtland Commission report changed everything. It opened a whole new era of thinking. It launched a movement.”

Twenty years after her seminal report, *Our Common Future*, Ms. Gro Harlem Brundtland, in her address to the United Nations General Assembly, stated:

“It is irresponsible, reckless and deeply immoral to question the seriousness of the situation. The time for diagnosis is over and the time for action is now.”

She stressed the importance of 2007 as a year when the wheels have to be set in motion.

In April 2007, and for the first time in its history, the United Nations Security Council devoted a special meeting to address the security dimension of climate change. In May, the Secretary-General appointed three special envoys on climate change. In July, the United Nations General Assembly convened a high level debate on climate change. In September, 70 heads of state attended the high-level meeting on climate change of the United Nations General Assembly convened at the initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. A few weeks ago, the Nobel Committee announced that this year’s Nobel Peace Prize will be presented to Mr. Al Gore, the former Vice-President of the United States of America, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In December, in Bali, it is expected that the wheels for the post-Kyoto commitments will be set in motion.

According to IPCC, up to 30 per cent of the known species may disappear before the end of the century as a result of climate change. The Global Biodiversity Outlook, as well as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the recent fourth edition of the UNEP Global Environment Outlook, identified climate change as one of the main causes of the unprecedented loss of biodiversity. It is for this reason that the international community celebrated this year the International Day for Biological Diversity on the theme “Biodiversity and climate change”. In her video address to the 300 participants marking this event at the Montreal Botanical Garden, Mme Monique Barbut, your CEO and Chairperson, was crystal clear. She echoed the message about an inconvenient truth on biodiversity contained in her article in the third issue of *Gincana*. It was a clear indication that the wheels for action by the financial mechanism of the Convention have been set in motion.

For the first time in the history of the Convention, the CEO of GEF paid an official working visit to the Secretariat of the Convention in Montreal. For the first time, a dialogue between the CEO and the 11 members of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties was held in Paris on 8 July 2007. For the first time, the CEO has addressed the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention. For the first time, a high-level dialogue between the CEO and the Parties was held on 9 July. More than 250 participants attended this event.

As a result, the Parties addressed the GEF Council concerns on the operationalizing and streamlining of the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties and recommended the preparation of a four-year framework of programme priorities related to the utilization of GEF resources for biodiversity, coinciding with the fifth replenishment of the GEF. This multi-year strategic plan will be prepared in partnership with GEF secretariat and will be submitted to ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in May 2008.

This meeting will be a landmark event in the life of the Convention. I would like to pay tribute to the Government of Germany for putting biodiversity at the highest level of the political

agenda, including within the G-8 Summit. I would also pay tribute to the Government of Germany for the unique preparation of this meeting, which will include for the first time a Heads of State and Government component at the ministerial meeting to be held from 28 to 30 May 2008. The participation of the CEO at this meeting will send a strong political message of the new era in the relation between the Convention and its financial mechanism.

Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the CEO for agreeing to assist the Secretariat in preparing a draft strategy on resource mobilization. In addition, the first consultative meeting, held in Montreal on 13 October, greatly benefited from the advice and support of the team leader on natural resources, Mr. Gustavo Fonseca.

I am also grateful to the Council, the CEO and its implementing agencies for expediting the adopting of the medium-sized project which will allow eligible countries to benefit from the GEF resources to enable them to submit their fourth national reports before the deadline of 30 March 2009. These reports will assess progress towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. 2010 will be a crucial year, as it will coincide with the conclusion of the Johannesburg target and the adoption of what we already in the Secretariat like to call the Nagoya biodiversity target, as well as the planned adoption of the international regime on access and benefit sharing. It will also coincide with the celebration of the International Year for Biological Diversity, as well as the fifth GEF Assembly.

I would like therefore to pay a sincere tribute to the CEO, the Council and the GEF partners for their continued support in assisting the Parties in the enhanced implementation phase of the three objectives of the Convention. The GEF family can be credited for having responded to the Brundtland call and having set in motion in 2007 the wheels of action for an enhanced partnership between the Convention and its financial mechanism to meet the unprecedented biodiversity challenges faced by humanity.

Thank you for your kind attention.