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**Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias**  
Executive Secretary  
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity  
413, Saint Jacques Street, suite 800  
Montreal QC H2Y 1N9

June 29, 2015

Dear Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:

In response to CBD notification 2015-045, "Submission of information related to the further consideration of the implications of the findings of GBO-4 and key scientific and technical needs related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020", Canada would like to contribute the following information.

***a) Information additional to that contained in GBO-4 or provided through Canada's fifth national report, that is relevant to the review of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets***

In February 2015, Canada's Minister of the Environment announced the 2020 biodiversity goals and targets for Canada. The goals and targets were developed through a federal-provincial-territorial working group, with input from a range of stakeholders and Aboriginal organizations. The goals and targets were inspired by the global Aichi targets, and adapted to Canada's domestic context. Each of Canada's national targets links to at least one Aichi target (as detailed in Chapter III of Canada's 5<sup>th</sup> National Report). They describe results to be achieved through the collective efforts of all Canadians, and identify specific, medium-term outcomes that are designed to support the long-term outcomes set out in Canada's Biodiversity Outcomes Framework. As such, the goals and targets constitute an important update to Canada's NBSAP.

The recent approval of Canada's biodiversity goals and targets follows on the announcement of Canada's National Conservation Plan (hereafter the Plan, or NCP). The Plan, announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in May 2014, aims to conserve Canada's natural heritage by protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems through conservation and stewardship actions, including on working landscapes and seascapes. The Plan focuses on action in three priority areas: conserving Canada's lands and waters, restoring ecosystems, and connecting Canadians to nature.

The Plan expands opportunities for partners, including municipalities, Aboriginal communities, environmental groups, hunters and anglers, landowners and community groups to take practical actions to safeguard the land and water around them.

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Through the Plan, the federal government is investing \$252 million over five years in a variety of conservation measures that include both new programs and the enhancement of existing successful initiatives. These investments and examples of 2014-15 progress under them include the following:

- \$100 million to secure ecologically sensitive lands in Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation Program, administered by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).
  - From May 2014 – March 2015, the NCC protected 9,900 hectares of land under the NACP, benefitting the habitat for 27 species at risk.
- \$37 million to strengthen marine and coastal conservation including work to establish, manage, and monitor marine protected areas and to support collaboration with partners to conserve marine ecosystems in the Gulf of Maine.
- \$3.2 million to develop a complete national inventory of conserved areas in Canada.
- \$100 million to support restoration efforts that will contribute to the recovery of degraded ecosystems and the protection and recovery of species at risk through the establishment of a new National Wetland Conservation Fund and expansion of the existing Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk.
  - In 2014-15, over 300 projects valued at almost \$20 million were approved under these three programs.
- \$9.2 million to connect urban Canadians to nature.
  - Work was initiated to improve public access at 10 National Wildlife Areas.
- \$3 million over three years to the Earth Rangers to expand their family-oriented conservation programming.

The NCP will facilitate collaboration to advance Canada's 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets. NCP initiatives will enable progress on many of the biodiversity targets, and the goals and targets will also help to measure and report on progress for some areas of the National Conservation Plan.

In addition to these overarching initiatives, Canada has also made progress in several areas related to specific Aichi targets since the publication of its 5<sup>th</sup> National Report. For example:

Target 6 (Sustainable management of aquatic resources)

In 2014, Canada conducted more than 75 scientific advisory processes which provided peer-reviewed science advice (e.g. sustainable harvest levels, status assessments, ecosystem dynamics) for consideration in integrated fisheries management plans and domestic sustainable fisheries policies.

Target 9 (Invasive alien species prevented and controlled)

Canada continues to perform research, monitoring, and risk assessment activities for many high-risk aquatic invasive species (AIS) and pathways for their introduction and spread. For example, detail-level species-specific risk assessments have been completed (published as Research Documents or Science Advisory Reports) for seven marine and five freshwater invertebrates and 11 freshwater fishes already present or not yet present in Canada. For marine invertebrates, 60 species already present in a given Canadian ecoregion and 45 species not yet present in a given Canadian ecoregion have been



assessed in a screening-level risk assessment (Science Advisory Report to be published soon). One-hundred and twenty-nine freshwater plant species (both present and not yet present in Canada) and 20 additional freshwater plant species currently in trade in Canada have undergone screening-level risk assessments. Screening-level risk assessments have also been completed for 12 species of freshwater fishes and 73 species of freshwater molluscs. The results of this risk assessment work have been used to support the development of the Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) regulation which came into force on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Pathway-based risk assessments have also been completed for ship-mediated introduction and transfer of AIS (via ballast water and hull fouling) in both Canadian Arctic and Great Lakes/ St. Lawrence regions, as well as relative risk assessments for ship-mediated introduction and spread of AIS within the Atlantic and Pacific regions of Canada.

#### Target 11 (Protected areas increased and improved)

Canada continues to contribute to the achievement of Target 11 including making progress on the designation of Scott Islands marine National Wildlife Area.

Under Canada's National Conservation Plan, Canada has expanded opportunities for conservation and protection of private land through investment in the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the Habitat Stewardship Program and Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk.

In addition, Canada is undertaking extensive scientific work to support progress toward Aichi Target 11. This includes, for example, work focused on the implementation of monitoring frameworks for existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including the collection and assessment of oceanographic and biological data, as well as the scientific research needed to support the identification of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs), potential new MPAs, and the development and expansion of Canada's Bioregional Network of MPAs. Scientific research to support the identification and assessment of specific conservation objectives for MPAs is ongoing.

A national workshop will be convened June 2015 which will bring together federal experts to discuss how to improve and enhance Canada's work related to marine protected areas. In addition, a national peer-review process will be held in 2015 to provide scientific guidance on the identification of effective area-based conservation measures which will help to guide reporting on Canada's progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Target 11.

#### Target 19 (Awareness of the values of biodiversity and steps to conserve and use it sustainably)

In June 2014, Canada released the results of the 2012 Canadian Nature Survey. The survey, administered in late 2012 and early 2013, collected information on Canadians' rates of participation and associated expenditures in nature-related activities, experiences and responses related to conflicts with wildlife, awareness of terms such as "species at risk", and sources of information about nature. The report will inform decisions related to Canada's conservation policies and programs, including efforts to better connect Canadians with nature. The report can be accessed on [biodivcanada.ca at http://www.biodivcanada.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=2A0569A9-1](http://www.biodivcanada.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=2A0569A9-1).

***b) Actions that Canada has undertaken to address key scientific and technical needs related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, as identified by SBSTTA at its seventeenth meeting, and contained in annex I to decision XII/1***

Canada has also made progress towards the actions outlined in SBSTAA 17 Recommendation XVII/1. For example:

#### Data and information

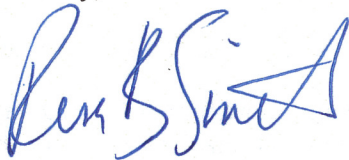
A recent scientific study developed a web-based data platform that will enable researchers to analyze marine mammal aerial survey photographs more efficiently by engaging the public. This platform was installed at the Assiniboine Park Zoo (Winnipeg, Manitoba) and is proving to be a promising technique to enhance data analysis and improve public awareness of the species included in the survey, as well as methods scientists employ to learn more about these animals.

#### Evaluation and assessment

In December 2014, a national scientific peer-review process was convened to develop a scientific approach for assessing the impacts of anthropogenic pressures on any given ecosystem component and its function(s). The approach outlines the graphical relationships likely to exist between a pressure and an ecosystem component, as well as an ecosystem component and its function. In addition, generic criteria that help characterize the level of impact on ecosystem function as a result of increasing pressure, including thresholds, are included. This approach will be integrated into a broader national risk management process.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments are beginning work on a national assessment of biodiversity science required to address policy needs. This assessment will take into account the science and technology needs identified in SBSTAA 17 Recommendation XVII/1, as well as other key documents and science needs that are specific to the Canadian context. Canada would be happy to provide an update on this work at a later date, once the project is further advanced.

Sincerely,



Risa Smith, SBSTTA Focal Point, on behalf of  
Robert McLean  
CBD National Focal Point