

**Statement Delivered on Behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity
8 December, 2009**

UNFCCC SBSTA 31 Plenary

Agenda Item 3: Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

Thank you chair,

I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity in my capacity as co-chair of the expert group on biodiversity and climate change, which met twice since it was established in May 2008, with generous support from the Governments of the United Kingdom, Finland, South Africa and Norway.

The group concluded that the inclusion of ecosystem-based adaptation, that is activities that use biodiversity and ecosystem services in an overall adaptation strategy to help people adapt to the impacts of climate change, can be cost-effective, generate multiple benefits and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. We stress that ecosystem based adaptation is not sectorally limited, but addresses potential adaptation needs across many sectors. Examples of such approaches include, to name a few, coastal protection activities, management of wetlands and floodplains for water flow and quality, and conservation/restoration of forests to stabilize land slopes and regulate water flows.

Ecosystem-based adaptation is highly relevant because it: can be applied at all levels; may be more cost-effective and more accessible to rural or poor communities than measures based on hard infrastructure and engineering; and can integrate and maintain traditional and local knowledge and cultural values. Ecosystem-based adaptation approaches can also contribute to climate change mitigation by conserving or enhancing carbon stocks and reducing emissions caused by ecosystem degradation and loss.

Recognising that ecosystem-based adaptation may require managing ecosystems to provide particular services at the expense of others, the group recommends that decisions to implement ecosystem-based adaptation be subject to risk assessment, scenario planning and adaptive management approaches that recognise and incorporate these potential trade-offs.

The final report of the expert group was welcomed by the CBD COP9 Bureau at its meeting in September 2009. The report has been transmitted to the President of UNFCCC COP15 by the CBD COP9 President with a view to convening a joint meeting of the two Bureaux.

The key messages of the expert group will be made available to delegates in their pigeonholes. The final report as well as further information is available on the website of the CBD and will be circulated during a side event planned for 11 December (13:00-14:30h), as well as during 'Forest Day 3' on 13 December.

Thank you once again.