



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and Climate Change

Statement by

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Convention on Biological Diversity

at the

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Ad Hoc Open-Ended
Working Group on Review of
Implementation of the
Convention on Biological Diversity

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Your Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment were a wake-up call. Human pressures on the natural functions of our planet have reached such a level that the ability of ecosystems to provide for the needs of future generations is now seriously, and perhaps irreversibly, compromised. Anthropogenic change to the natural functioning of our planet has never, since the first appearance of the human race, been as destructive as during the last fifty years, and has resulted in unprecedented levels of biodiversity extinction on Earth.

The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the first volume of which was published in this building in Paris last February, showed that between 20 and 30% of animal and plant species are in danger of disappearing before the end of this century. For this reason, in his message to the international community on the occasion of International Biodiversity Day, celebrated on 22 May this year under the theme “Biodiversity and Climate Change”, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, called for the strengthened, determined and rapid implementation of the conventions on biological diversity and climate change at the global, national and local level. Your meeting today provides an appropriate opportunity to answer this call and translate into action and institutions the spirit and the letter of the new era of the Convention, which began in March last year, in Curitiba, Brazil.

Curitiba saw the birth of an enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention. I would therefore take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the Brazilian authorities and their President, Mr. Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva. Our gratitude also extends to Her Excellency Ms Marina Silva, Minister for the Environment of Brazil, for her signal and significant contribution to the emergence of the new era of the Convention, which requires the active involvement of all stakeholders in the national and international community, including local authorities. Last March in Curitiba, the representatives of 34 mayors met for the first time in the Convention’s history to consider the contribution of cities to the implementation of the Convention. The Curitiba Declaration on cities and biodiversity has opened the way to the integration of the three objectives of the Convention in the urban environment, just at the time when city dwellers have become the majority of the world’s population and will be increasingly so in the future. I would therefore like to thank the members of the steering committee for this initiative and, in particular, Mr. Roberto Richa, the Mayor of Curitiba.

The enhanced phase of implementation also requires the active involvement of decision-makers. Last month, at their summit in Heiligendamm, the Heads of State or Government of the G-8 committed themselves to stepping up efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity with a view to achieving the Johannesburg target of achieving a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. For the first time in its history, the G-8 considered the issue of biodiversity. Let us all congratulate the German Chancellor, Ms Angela Merkel, and the other Heads of State and Government for this commitment to protecting life on Earth.

The enhanced phase of implementation of the three objectives of the Convention also requires the establishment of a new global partnership between the world’s nations, linked in solidarity by the inescapable fact that they share, by necessity, a single destiny and a common future. The Potsdam Initiative of the G8+5 is without doubt an event of historic importance, in that it lays the foundation for a new relationship between the richest countries in financial terms and the richest countries in terms of biodiversity. Let us congratulate HE Gabriel Sigmar, the German Minister of the Environment, and his partners in this initiative for their demonstration of renewed and revamped international solidarity in keeping with the demands of the modern world.

To achieve a common project of this type, commitments that have been entered into must be fulfilled, including at the national level.

National biodiversity strategies and action plans are the basic tools for translating the three objectives of the Convention at national level and the vehicle *par excellence* for integrating biological diversity into development processes. To date, 147 Contracting Parties have adopted such instruments. Fifteen years after the Convention was opened for signature, 43 countries have not done so. Only 12 countries have revised their strategy and action plans in order to integrate the 2010 biodiversity objective. To date, 131 countries have submitted their third national report. Your meeting provides the opportunity, for the first time, to review and share experiences in developing and implementing national strategies, as well as integrating the objectives of the Convention into development processes, including those relating to the Millennium Development Goals.

In this regard, capacity-building in developing countries is essential. I would therefore like to extend my most sincere gratitude to UNEP and UNDP as implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility for their contribution to organizing yesterday's training workshop at the Paris Natural History Museum, in which more than 50 experts participated. I would also like to thank the French authorities, represented here by the Secretary of State;

The mobilization of new and additional resources is also essential for the success of the new phase of implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. The financial mechanism of the Convention has a critical role to play at this time of enhanced implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. I would therefore like to pay a special tribute to the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the Global Environment Fund, Ms Monique Barbut, for her support for biodiversity. We should applaud her decision to continue to fund the preparation of the fourth national reports and to launch an innovative pilot project to consolidate national reports. We should also applaud the first-ever informal dialogue yesterday with the Bureau that she organized yesterday. The fact that she is here this morning is an additional testimony to her personal commitment to establishing a relationship of the highest quality between the Convention and its financial mechanism.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In less than a year, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be taking place in Bonn. There will then be only two years left to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target and finalize negotiations on the International regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. The meeting in Bonn is therefore of particular importance for the future of the Convention. It will review the report of the present meeting and your recommendations to adjust the mechanisms, structure and *modus operandi* of the Convention at a time of enhancement of the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention.

In an article published last week in the *New York Times*, Al Gore, the former Vice-President of the United States wrote, and I quote: "*Our home — Earth — is in danger. What is at risk of being destroyed is not the planet itself, but the conditions that have made it hospitable for human beings... The climate crisis offers us the chance to experience what few generations in history have had the privilege of experiencing: a generational mission; a compelling moral purpose; a shared cause; and the thrill of being forced by circumstances to put aside the pettiness and conflict of politics and to embrace a genuine moral and spiritual challenge.*"

Jean Jacques Rousseau once said: “great occasions make great men”, and I would like to add that “great occasions make lasting institutions”. Your meeting today does indeed provide a great occasion to a great institution to do what it was intended to do and fulfil its promises on behalf of a great cause: the protection of life on Earth. Jean Jacques Rousseau also said that “there is no real action without a will”. I can assure you, Mr. Chair and distinguished delegates, that your Secretariat has the unwavering will to continue to spare no effort to serve you in addressing successfully the great cause that is in your hands today.

Thank you for your kind attention.
