



**STATEMENT**  
**by**  
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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  
**of the**  
**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**at the opening session of the**

**FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON  
SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

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COP 10 / MOP 5

Mr. Chair,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Karibu Nyumbani* (welcome home in Kiswahili);

In this very same room, 18 years ago, on 22 May 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity was born.

*Karibu* – Your meeting today is indeed the first meeting of a CBD organ since 2000.

*Karibu* – This fourteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-14) is the first meeting of SBSTTA since its establishment in 1994 to be held in Nairobi at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme, the host of the Secretariat.

I would like therefore to pay tribute to you Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, for not only hosting this special meeting, but also for all the arrangements made by your team. Indeed, SBSTTA-14 is a special meeting.

It is special as it is being convened at the occasion of the worldwide celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity. The scientific committee here represented by SBSTTA has to make its own contribution to this unique event for the biodiversity family as a whole.

This is a special meeting as it combines the originally planned SBSTTA-14 and SBSTTA-15 into a 10-day meeting. This also would have not been possible without the substantial financial support of UNEP, and the support of the Executive Director of UNEP and the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions headed by Mr. Bakary Kante.

For a special meeting, a special Bureau. I want to pay tribute to the leadership of the SBSTTA Bureau under the stewardship of Mr. Spencer Thomas. Thank you Spencer for your continued guidance in assisting the Secretariat in preparing the 35 documents comprised of 900 pages of information for your meeting.

SBSTTA-14 is a special meeting as it will have on its agenda more than 22 items and sub-items of strategic scientific importance for the success of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity–Aichi Nagoya Biodiversity Summit. In addition, it is a special meeting as it will have to make its own scientific and technical contribution to the design of the strategic plan of the CBD, which will be adopted at the Aichi Nagoya Biodiversity Summit.

The strategic plan of the CBD for 2011-2020, which will also include a 2050 biodiversity vision, as well as means of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms, requires the scientific and technical contribution of the scientific body of the CBD. The new strategic plan will have to integrate the findings of the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3), which has just been officially launched by your Chair. This meeting will also have to operationalize through the scientific and technical advice the findings of this unique document based on the 120 national reports received from Parties. Thanks to the financial contribution of Japan, many more reports are expected in the coming days. We sincerely hope that the 193 Parties to the Convention will be able to submit their national report before Aichi Nagoya Biodiversity Summit.

The operationalization from the scientific body of the findings of GBO-3 will be the basis for the future work programme of SBSTTA. Indeed, the mobilisation of the scientific committee at the local, national, regional, and international level is more than ever required to address the intertwined challenges of the loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change. Equipping and empowering SBSTTA in order to play its mandated role by Article 25 of the Convention on Biological Diversity is more than ever required. Indeed, the consideration of agenda item 5 on “Ways and means to improve the effectiveness of

the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice” is an issue whose time has come to be addressed. Enhancing the role of SBSTTA calls for the enhancement of the capacity of your Secretariat in order to provide you with effective services and support. The 16 staff of the scientific division of the Secretariat have reached their human limit. The launch of GBO-3 today is a case in point.

Between SBSTTA-13 and SBSTTA-14, the Secretariat under the leadership of Mr. Jo Mulongoy, has convened 35 scientific and planning meetings, including three workshops on biofuels which brought together 100 participants on a topic for which there is no staff assigned. Moreover, the Secretariat has undertaken 16 climate-change activities requested by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth meeting, including two meetings of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Climate Change and biodiversity in London and Helsinki, as well as the meeting of the AHTEG drafting committee in Cape Town, without any assessed budget.

The unprecedented loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change requires, more than ever before, a strengthened SBSTTA. Indeed, the mobilization of the scientific community at all levels, from local to national and from regional to international, in support of the three objectives of the Convention is urgently required. The scientific community must be involved in the design and implementation of the Aichi Nagoya biodiversity road map. The Convention’s new phase of enhanced partnership to be born in Aichi Nagoya will also require the full engagement of the scientific community at all level. This is particularly important for the implementation of the Aichi Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing to be adopted on 29 October.

Enhancing the role of SBSTTA calls also for a partnership with the suggested Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) whose time has come. The establishment of such mechanism in support and in complement to SBSTTA is an idea whose time has come. IPBES, when established, will need to build and complement the work of the Secretariat of SBSTTA, the storehouse of unique and essential knowledge and information provided since 1996 by 193 Parties through their reporting requirements. The Secretariat is the repository of more than 530 national reports and many others are expected in the coming weeks representing a unique wealth of information contained in more than 5000 pages. Servicing the 193 Parties to the Convention, nine meetings of the Conference of the Parties, 14 meetings of the SBSTTA, 23 AHTEGs and 37 scientific meetings, the Secretariat has made a unique contribution to promoting science at the service of the international community as a whole. Such a partnership is essential to meet the intertwined challenge of unprecedented loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change.

To this end, your meeting has before it Technical Series No. 51 on biodiversity and climate change which was submitted to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties in September last year in Strömstad and officially transmitted to the Bureau of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December last year. The Copenhagen Summit, with the participation of more than 120 Heads of State and Government, had before it also the CBD report on ocean acidification. Indeed a joint work programme between the three Rio conventions to be adopted by Nagoya, Cancun, Seoul and submitted to the Rio+20 meeting is also an idea whose time has come. A draft is before you.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the adoption of the text of the Convention in 1992, the Executive Secretary, Dr. Mostafa Tolba, sated: “The cost of conserving and sustainably using the biodiversity involved were enormous, but it had to be borne in mind that the cost of inaction would be far greater.” The bill of inadequate action is reflected in GBO-3 which has just been launched few hours ago in Tokyo, Bangkok, Manama, and Moscow and will be simultaneously launched in Bonn, Geneva, Paris, London, Copenhagen, Chamonix, and in the coming hours in Santiago, Panama, Brasilia, New York, in addition to all other United Nations capitals.

Thirty years ago, in 1970, an eminent American economist stated: “Hundreds of thousands of species will perish, and this reduction of 10 to 20 per cent if the earth’s biota will occur in about half a human life span ... This reduction of the biological diversity of the planet is the most basic issue of our time.” This eminent scientist is Dr. Thomas Lovejoy who will present to you in few minutes the findings of GBO-3.

The message arising from GBO-3 is crystal clear, as stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, “business as usual is no more an option for humankind”. This is also valid for international organisations. Indeed, business as usual is no more an option between the Secretariat and the host organisation and I want to pay a special tribute to the Executive Director of UNEP for the new partnership between the CBD Secretariat and UNEP, which will be presented in two weeks time to the third joint meeting of the COP and SBSTTA bureau here in Nairobi on 23 May.

As Jomo Kenyatta, the founding father of our host country Kenya stated: “Our children may learn about the heroes of the past. Our task is to make ourselves the architects of the future.” Indeed a new global coordinated vision for living in harmony with nature into the future is urgently required and your meeting today in Nairobi provides you with the unique opportunity to empower SBSTTA to live up to its statutory mandate and be the scientific body of the New York Summit and the Aichi Nagoya Summit on Biodiversity.

I thank you for your attention.

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