



**OPENING STATEMENT BY
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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

TO

**THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL
ON BIOSAFETY**

PYEONGCHANG, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Mr. President,
His Excellency Mr. Sang-jick Yoon, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy of the
Government of the Republic of Korea
Mr. Choi Moon-soon, Governor of Gangwon Province,
Mr. Shim Jae-gook, Mayor of Pyeongchang,
Mr. Lee Won-wook, Member of the National Assembly

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to the seventh meeting of the governing body of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety – the meeting of the Parties – here in Pyeongchang, where we are surrounded by biodiversity in the beautiful Taebaek Mountains.

This month marks the eleventh anniversary of the entry into force of the Biosafety Protocol. In the last eleven years, we have seen the Protocol develop and evolve as an instrument of international law and as a tool for the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms. Important decisions have been taken, extensive efforts at implementation have been undertaken, and support for the Protocol has continued to evolve.

As we may recall, unlike most international instruments, only thirty months after the Protocol was opened for signature, it gained the necessary support to enter into force. However the initial momentum seems to be diminishing. The number of Parties will soon reach 168, with the recent accession of the Protocol by the United Arab Emirates on 12 September 2014. This means that since we last met two years ago in Hyderabad, only 4 additional Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have ratified or acceded to the Cartagena Protocol. In addition, the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress will reach 26 ratifications or accessions but still requires 14 additional ratifications or accessions to enter into force.

The effective implementation of the Protocol relies on the domestic frameworks, procedures and mechanisms established by Parties to regulate, *inter alia*, the transboundary movement of living modified organisms or LMOs. Many Parties have taken steps to establish legal, administrative and other measures to implement their obligations under the Protocol. The continuous growth in the development and use of LMOs requires a consolidation of the biosafety measures.

At the last meeting of the Parties, in Hyderabad, the second assessment and review of the Cartagena Protocol indicated that, while progress had been made in establishing biosafety systems, significant challenges remained for a number of Parties in making such systems fully functional to support effective implementation of the Protocol.

At this meeting here in Pyeongchang, there is a special session this afternoon on the implementation of the Protocol. This session is being held to provide a platform for sharing experiences and identifying challenges in the implementation of the Protocol. It will also enable Parties to exchange views on better ways to integrate biosafety into relevant national development plans and programmes, including national biodiversity strategies and action plans

(NBSAPs); and on how to better mobilize the human and financial resources needed to enhance effective implementation of the Protocol at the national level in line with the Strategic Plan for the Protocol for 2011-2020. It is hoped that this session will help advance the implementation of the Protocol.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The seventh meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will have a range of recommendations before it for its consideration, including recommendations from the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on improving the efficiency of structures and processes under the Convention and its two Protocols. The recommendations from the Working Group include a proposal to organize concurrent meetings for the Convention and its Protocols in a two-week period, as of the end of the next biennium. The Working Group has also proposed that a Subsidiary Body for Implementation be established to help facilitate implementation under the Convention and its Protocols.

The overall objective of the measures proposed, including any changes to current practices, is to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, gain greater integration between them and achieve better cost-effectiveness.

A close integration of the governance of the Convention and its Protocols would promote synergies and provide efficiencies both in financial terms and with respect to substantive considerations. It could contribute to a reduction in costs to the core budgets, avoidance of duplication, and more focused agendas, and would allow Parties to deal more coherently and in a coordinated manner with cross-cutting issues. These issues may include budgetary and institutional issues, organizational matters, multi-year programming, guidance to the financial mechanism, the clearing-houses and capacity-building.

In this direction, efforts must be made to better integrate the Convention and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which have over time become quite separated. Closer integration would also provide the Protocols with a clearer profile in the context of the Convention and may enhance support for their implementation. Hopefully, a more integrated approach will create a new momentum in the ratification and implementation of the Protocol and of the Supplementary Protocol.

Our resources – both financial and human – are not unlimited. I therefore urge you to keep these constraints and opportunities in mind as you develop your decisions on these issues.

Distinguished delegates,

The seventh meeting of the Parties will also have before it the report of the functional review of the Secretariat produced by a group of consultants. This report is the result of the request of the Conference of the Parties to the Executive Secretary, in their decision XI/31, paragraph 25, to undertake an in-depth functional review of the Secretariat, in consultation with the Executive Director of UNEP, with a view to updating its structure and the grading of posts in line with the Strategic Plan's focus on implementation by Parties, and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The final report of the consultants on the functional review of the Secretariat recommends a two-phase process for the transformation of the Secretariat. This report, after its consideration and decision by the Parties, will be implemented, as appropriate,

within United Nations rules and regulations. As a Secretariat, we will continue to strive to work efficiently in order to maximize the use of the limited resources available.

The seventh meeting will also deliberate on other matters, such as the agenda items on risk assessment and risk management and on socioeconomic considerations.

As always, the Secretariat stands ready to provide the needed services to the Parties.

Distinguished delegates, before I conclude, allow me to pay tribute to the significant contributions of the Government of India, and specifically the outgoing President of COP-MOP, Mr. Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change of India. Two years ago, we met in Hyderabad at our sixth meeting and adopted 16 decisions, including agreement on the way forward on guidance for risk assessment, and also on socioeconomic considerations.

Now we are here in Pyeongchang, in the Republic of Korea. The common denominator of our presence here is the theme for the meetings of the Convention and its Protocols: “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development”.

Furthermore, I would like to express our deep and sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea. Without their tremendous engagement and efforts in organizing this meeting of the Parties, our meeting could not have the high level of recognition that it is receiving here in the Republic of Korea or, indeed, internationally.

I urge you to seize the moment in your discussions over the coming week to continue to build a strong and vibrant Biosafety Protocol.

I thank you all for your kind attention.