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(Check against delivery)

HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON BIODIVERSITY
STATEMENT MADE BY H.E. HAROLDO RODAS
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Excellencies,

We have listened with great interest the statements of delegations. Guatemala associates with statements made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Chile on behalf of the Rio Group also we fully identify with the statement made by Brazil on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded Megadiverse Countries. Very briefly I would like add 5 important points to the discussion:

1. Guatemala reiterates its deep commitment to a successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing as well as to conclude the Strategic Plan Post 2010 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and resource mobilization strategy. We believe that today's meeting can catalyze the political will needed for a successful outcome in Nagoya.
2. Agreeing to an effective ABS Protocol represents a great opportunity for the Convention on Biological Diversity and for Member states of the United Nations. It ensures access to genetic resources and recognizes the value of traditional knowledge of indigenous and rural communities in the world. Guatemala is already designing its legal and regulatory frameworks at the national level that will be in line with the future ABS Protocol and is also working on a comprehensive national policy that strengthens conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
3. Although the link between the ABS Protocol and development is not easy to grasp, the evolution of our civilization has been linked to the use of traditional knowledge of biodiversity. Today we face an enormous challenge: to ensure that our ecosystems adapt to climate change without threatening our food security. We can better address this global challenge if we have a multilateral framework that allows us to access genetic resources and share its benefits.
4. As a mega diverse country and also a country of origin of many species, the Guatemalan System of Protected Areas has been the most successful strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and is an essential component to address our high vulnerability to climate change. Protected areas cover 32% of the country and its stewardship is a participatory endeavor between communities, local authorities and indigenous groups.
5. Finally, we underscore the importance that the CBD covers all geographic areas of the world, and call for its universal membership.

Thank you very much.