



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

**THE COUNCIL OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
FACILITY AT ITS TWENTY-SECOND MEETING**

Washington, D.C., 19 – 21 November 2003

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Chief Executive Officer,
Distinguished members of the Council,
Colleagues,**

I am pleased to have this opportunity once again to address the GEF Council and to report briefly on some of the main developments under the Convention on Biological Diversity of relevance to your work.

First, I would like to start with the entry force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which took place on 11 September 2003. Today, the total of ratifications/accessions to the Protocol stands at 70. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol will take place in Kuala Lumpur from 23 to 27 February 2003, in conjunction with the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

At this stage, it is important to step up capacity-building efforts to ensure that all countries are in a position to implement the Protocol as soon as it becomes effective for them. I also would encourage all Governments—Parties and non-Parties alike—to provide the Biosafety Clearing-House with the information on national decisions on living modified organisms that is necessary for the Protocol to operate most effectively. In this connection, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the Global Environment Facility in assisting countries to prepare for the entry into force of the Protocol through the GEF Initial Strategy on biosafety and the GEF-supported projects for the development of national biosafety frameworks and other demonstration projects. Now that the Protocol is in force, it is time to consider further responses to the guidance on biosafety provided by the Conference of the Parties. I would like to refer to, in particular, the request made by

the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting for financial support for national capacity-building in biosafety, in particular for enabling effective participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House and in the implementation of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn now to the ninth meeting of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), which was held last week in Montreal. The Subsidiary Body had a very heavy agenda. It, however, succeeded in developing for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties new draft programmes of work on:

- Protected areas;**
- Technology transfer and cooperation; and**
- Mountain biodiversity.**

The Subsidiary Body recognized that existing systems of protected areas are not representative of the world's ecosystems, habitat types and biomes and species. In particular, marine areas, of which less than 1 per cent are protected, are particularly under-represented. SBSTTA agreed on the objective of establishment and maintenance by 2010 of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network of protected areas and areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity. It adopted the elements, goals and targets of a draft programme of work on protected areas for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting.

The draft programme of work on technology transfer builds upon the recommendations of the Inter-Sessional Meeting on the

Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties, held in March, and the Trondheim Conference on Technology Transfer and Capacity-building, which met in June, as well as the model developed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It includes programme elements relating to: technology assessments; information systems; creating enabling environments; and capacity building and enhancement. In forwarding the draft programme of work to the Conference of the Parties, SBSTTA recommended, among other things, that the Conference of the Parties should consider ways and means of involving multilateral financial institutions, regional banks and other relevant funding bodies in the work of the Convention and in the efforts of Parties in its implementation, particularly with respect to capacity development and technology transfer and cooperation.

The draft programme of work on mountain biodiversity provides a comprehensive framework for action to achieve a significant reduction on the rate of loss of mountain biodiversity by 2010. SBSTTA recommended that the Conference of the Parties should note that Parties should implement the programme of work in the context of their national and subnational priorities and needs and should identify priority actions and adopt outcome-oriented targets for mountain biodiversity.

The proposals for all three programmes of work will be considered by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, and the Conference of the Parties is expected to provide further guidance to GEF on these issues.

SBSTTA also addressed a number of other matters that have been on its agenda and that of the Conference of the Parties in the past. It reviewed the Principles and Guidelines of the Ecosystem Approach, and developed advice on guidelines for their implementation. It also reviewed the draft Addis Ababa Principles

and Guidelines on Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and recommended that they should be adopted by the Conference of the Parties. In addition, it considered proposals for ways and means to remove or mitigate perverse incentives and made a number of recommendations to the Conference of the Parties in that respect.

The Subsidiary Body reviewed the status of designing national-level monitoring programmes and indicators and explored gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework from a technical perspective of the threats of invasive alien species to biodiversity. It considered the development the outcome-oriented targets and recommended that the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopt a limited set of global indicators to help monitor progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target. On a related matter, it also recommended that the targets in the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation be integrated into all relevant work programmes under the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has on several occasions expressed its concern about the impact of climate change on biodiversity, particularly on forest biodiversity, coral reefs and drylands. At last week's meeting, SBSTTA addressed once again the question of the link between biodiversity and climate, an issue of some significance for GEF as it operates the financial mechanism for both the biodiversity and the climate change conventions.

SBSTTA considered the report of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group established to address this matter. It welcomed the report of the Expert Group and commended it to the Conference of Parties as scientific advice. It also transmitted the report to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Conference of the

Parties of the UNFCCC for their consideration at their meetings in Milan next month.

There are two general points that SBSTTA noted that I would like to highlight here.

- First, there are opportunities to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in ways that are mutually beneficial and synergistic, and that contribute simultaneously to the achievement of the objectives of Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and other international agreements, all within broader national development objectives;**
- Secondly, the application of the ecosystem approach, which provides a framework for integrated management of land, water and living resources, would facilitate the formulation of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects that also contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.**

In its report, the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change noted the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as an element of adaptation strategies, because genetically-diverse populations and species-rich ecosystems have a greater potential to adapt to climate change. Accordingly, the reduction of other pressures on biodiversity arising from habitat conversion, over-harvesting, pollution, and alien species invasions, constitute important climate-change adaptation measures.

Mr Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to join my colleagues from the Climate Change and Desertification Conventions in welcoming the

proposal in the GEF Business Plan 2005-2007 for “piloting an Operational Approach to Adaptation”. While we also welcome the approach suggested at the last GEF Council meeting which leads to the inclusion of adaptation activities in all relevant focal areas, we hope that the higher profile of adaptation in the GEF Business Plan translates into new and additional resources in addition to strengthening the adaptation response of various GEF Operational Focal Areas. This new approach would facilitate synergies among the Rio conventions when it comes to implementation at the national level. We look forward to working actively with GEF, its Implementing Agencies and our sister conventions in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now say a few brief words on the upcoming seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, where the Conference of the Parties is expected to consider a range of recommendations arising out of inter-sessional meetings, in particular the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties up to 2010, the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing, the Open-ended Ad Hoc Inter-Sessional Working Group on the Implementation of Article 8(j) and Related Provisions. I have already described to you, here and at your previous meeting, the outcomes of the two meetings of SBSTTA and the Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Multi-Year Programme of Work.

The meetings on access and benefit-sharing and Article 8(j) will be held back-to-back early next month in Montreal, and are expected to provide substantive advice for consideration by the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

The Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing will look at progress made in the implementation of the Bonn Guidelines, other

approaches to access and benefit-sharing, including the development of an international regime, as recommended by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the needs for capacity-building identified by countries to implement the Bonn Guidelines. The latter item is of particular relevance to this body, given the guidance given by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting regarding the need for GEF to fund projects that assist in the implementation of the Action Plan on Capacity-building for Access and Benefit-sharing.

The Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions will consider progress in the implementation the programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions, including its integration into the thematic programmes of work under the Convention. In particular, it will consider:

- The first phase of the composite report on the status and trends regarding the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities;**
- Guidelines for the conduct of cultural, environmental, and social impact assessments regarding developments proposed to take place on, or which are likely to impact on, sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities;**
- Participatory mechanisms for indigenous and local communities; and**
- Sui generis systems for the protection of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities.**

The Conference of the Parties also is expected to consider the financial needs of implementing various programmes of work and the Strategic Plan of the Convention. In particular, it will need to review the requirements for new and additional financial resources to

achieve the 2010 target of reducing significantly the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level, as adopted by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is also expected to provide further guidance to the financial mechanism, particularly in the light of the new programmes of work and the 2010 target, and make arrangements for the third review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

The preparations for the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties are well under way. I am pleased to take note that preparatory work on financial resources and mechanism have involved substantial consultation between the Convention and GEF secretariats, and the staff concerned have continued along the path of collaboration that has been built in the past few years.

One issue arising out of the discussions that I believe merits your attention is how the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism of the Convention will contribute to the realization of the 2010 target. First and foremost, as pointed out by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, this will require the provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries. One may also think about ways to adjust the utilization of available financial resources to the needs of achieving the 2010 target. For instance, project concepts, briefs or summaries could explicitly state how the project concerned can contribute to the achievement of the 2010 target and demonstrate how they respond to particular guidance from the Conference of the Parties. Over time, this would help generate convincing evidence of how the financial mechanism is contributing to the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan. I would therefore welcome further discussions on this subject.

As I have said, the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be followed by its first meeting serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol. This is a long-awaited event and has been the subject of considerable preparatory work under the guidance of the Intergovernmental Committee on the Cartagena Protocol (ICCP). Building on the work and recommendations of that Committee, the meeting is expected to take decisions on a wide range of issues that are important to ensure the successful implementation of the Protocol during the early stages of operation. In particular, it is expected to make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on guidance to the financial mechanism, including eligibility criteria and programme priorities under the Protocol. The outcome of the meeting will shape the implementation of the Protocol for a number of years to come. It is therefore important to ensure a high level of participation from all Governments—current and future Parties alike.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I should like to invite you all to the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol. Your participation and contribution will once again prove to be critical in building global consensus on the efficient and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention and the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful meeting.