

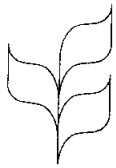


Global Environment Facility

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STATEMENT OF HAMDALLAH ZEDAN,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



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**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

**HAMDALLAH ZEDAN
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

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

Washington, D.C., 18– 20 May 2004

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates and guests,

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 since your last meeting, in November 2003.

Last December marked the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention. Much water has passed under the bridge since that time. The Convention has evolved into a major international instrument for the achievement of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The Parties have adopted programmes of work covering all of the Earth's major biomes. They have also addressed a wide range of cross-cutting issues that affect all types of ecosystems and have developed tools and guidelines and mechanisms to support implementation. Major progress has also been made in addressing the often contentious subject of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing and in giving full effect to Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention, dealing with traditional knowledge. And the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the only international treaty on safety in biotechnology, entered into force last September.

Throughout this time, the Global Environment Facility, as the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism of the Convention and the Protocol, has proven its worth in funding, and mobilizing additional funding for, projects both to further the aims of the Convention and to ensure that the Cartagena Protocol is fully implemented and meets the high expectations placed in it.

Two years ago, at its sixth meeting in The Hague, the Conference of the Parties adopted a Strategic Plan and, with it, an ambitious target—that of achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss by the year 2010. This target was endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002. Much of our work since that time has involved looking at ways in which the international community can meet this target, particularly through the programmes of work under the Convention.

It is against this background that the Conference of the Parties held its seventh meeting, in Kuala Lumpur last February, an event that was immediately followed by the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties had before it one of the most crowded but forward-looking agendas of any meeting under the Convention. It was also the most widely attended—further evidence of the increasing interest in and commitment to the Convention process. I think it is fair to say that the results exceeded expectations in almost every area of activity.

In particular, the Conference of the Parties adopted two new programmes of work covering issues that directly address specific articles of the Convention, namely, protected areas and transfer of technology and cooperation, as well as a programme of work on mountain biodiversity. It reviewed and elaborated the existing programmes of work on the biodiversity of inland water ecosystems and marine and coastal areas. It also adopted a multi-year programme of work with an overriding focus on implementation and review of progress. In response to the call of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it agreed on a process for the negotiation of an international regime for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. Further progress was made towards the sustainable use of biodiversity with the adoption of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines on the subject. The Conference of the Parties reviewed the state of implementation and adopted decisions on all of the ongoing thematic and cross-cutting programmes of work, including a number of important decisions to advance the programme of work on Article 8(j). It also adopted a number of decisions on mechanisms for implementation—the financial mechanism and resources, national reporting, including guidelines for the third national reports, the clearing-house mechanism and communication, education and public awareness. A decision on cooperation with other organizations, processes and initiatives was also adopted, calling, *inter alia*, for an examination of options for a flexible framework between all relevant actors, such as a global partnership on biodiversity, in order to enhance implementation through improved cooperation.

Perhaps most crucially of all, however, from a strategic perspective, the Parties showed their commitment to the 2010 target by adopting a provisional framework for goals and sub-targets and a provisional list of indicators for assessing progress toward the achievement of the target. In this respect, it also established an Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention to consider progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan and achievements leading up to the 2010 target, to review the impacts and effectiveness of existing processes under the Convention, and to consider ways and means of identifying and overcoming obstacles to effective implementation.

Following the seventh ordinary meeting, the Conference of the Parties held its first meeting serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Protocol now has 97 Parties, which represents more than half of the Parties to the Convention. The meeting adopted a number of decisions that will guide the implementation of the Protocol over the coming years. These include decisions on rules of procedure, decision-making procedures, monitoring and reporting, information-sharing and the Biosafety Clearing-House, capacity-building, a medium-term programme of work, and other issues necessary for the effective implementation of the Protocol. The Parties also recommended guidance to the financial mechanism for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Of particular significance was the agreement reached on the establishment of a compliance committee, which will have a critical role to play in the future. The Parties also established open-ended inter-sessional expert groups to advance progress on two of the more difficult issues facing the Parties—documentation accompanying living modified organisms, particularly such organisms intended for direct use as food or feed or for processing, and liability and redress.

In all, the meeting was a successful culmination of long process that began with the adoption of the Convention itself in 1992, through the first negotiating session for the Biosafety Protocol in 1996, the adoption of the Protocol in January 2000, and its entry into force in September 2003. The outcome of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol—together with the ever-

growing number of ratifications—gives every reason for confidence that the Protocol will be successful in serving its purpose as a practical and operational tool to ensure safety in biotechnology, especially in a transboundary context. The role of the GEF in this respect will continue to be of great importance and we look forward to future collaboration.

Mr. Chairman,

Those therefore are the main outcomes of the two meetings in Kuala Lumpur. May I, however, focus here on *two decisions* of particular relevance to the Global Environment Facility as the institutional structure operating the financial mechanism under the Convention and its Biosafety Protocol. These are decision VII/20, on further guidance to the financial mechanism and decision VII/22, on the arrangements for the third review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

First, let me turn to the guidance to the financial mechanism, which, as has been the practice in recent meetings of the Conference of the Parties, is consolidated into a single decision.

In the first operative paragraph of that decision, the Conference of the Parties decided that the report of the GEF Council should be made available three months prior to ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties and in all six United Nations languages.

The Conference of the Parties then provided several elements to add to its existing guidance to the financial mechanism. It invited the financial mechanism to provide financial support for a number of existing programmes of work and specific activities, including those on:

- Marine and coastal biodiversity;
- Monitoring and indicators;
- The ecosystem approach;
- The Global Taxonomy Initiative;
- Sustainable use;
- Invasive alien species; and

- Education and public awareness.

With regard to the newly adopted *programme of work on protected areas*, the Conference of the Parties requested the Global Environment Facility to encourage increased support to address the long-term financial sustainability of protected areas, to further develop its portfolio on protected areas and to support country-driven early action by continuing to streamline its procedures and the provision of fast disbursing resources through expedited means.

As for the new *programme of work on technology transfer and cooperation*, the Conference of the Parties decided that the GEF should provide adequate and timely financial support for its implementation and listed a number of areas on which this support should be focused.

On *biodiversity and climate change*, the Conference of the Parties requested the financial mechanism to provide financial support for assistance in capacity-building and in developing synergy-oriented programmes.

With regard to *access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing*, the Conference of the Parties reiterated its guidance with regard to GEF support for capacity-building.

On *national reporting*, the Conference of the Parties requested GEF to explore ways to expedite and simplify its procedures for allocating funds for the preparation of national reports and to provide financial support for the preparation of the third national reports, which are due 15 May 2005.

On *biosafety*, the Conference of the Parties decided upon eligibility criteria for funding by the Global Environment Facility and called for support from GEF for capacity-building activities and an extension of its existing support for demonstration projects on the implementation of national biosafety frameworks.

Finally, with regard to the *Millennium Development Goals*, the Conference of the Parties called for development activities to be implemented in ways that are consistent with and do not compromise the achievement of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2010 target and invited GEF to support capacity-building activities in developing countries for that purpose. It also invited GEF to provide

financial support for the implementation of activities to achieve and monitor progress towards the goals and targets identified in the framework for the evaluation of progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Convention.

The *second* decision of direct relevance to GEF is decision VII/22, on the third review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism. This exercise is mandated in Article 21 of the Convention, which states that “the Conference of the Parties shall review the effectiveness of the [financial mechanism] ... not less than two years after entry into force of [the] Convention and thereafter on a regular basis”. You will recall that at its second meeting the Conference of the Parties decided to review the effectiveness of the financial mechanism at its fourth meeting, and thereafter every three years. The first and second reviews resulted in a number of actions to improve the effectiveness of the financial mechanism.

The terms of reference for the third review, including the objectives, methodology, criteria and procedures, are annexed to decision VI/22. The review, which will cover the period from July 2001 to June 2005, is to be conducted by an independent evaluator. The independent evaluator will prepare a compilation and synthesis of information obtained from a number of sources, together with recommendations, all of which will be made available to GEF for comments. Based on the materials provided by the independent evaluator, the Secretariat, in consultation with GEF, is to prepare a draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting. All relevant documents are to be submitted to the Parties three months prior to the eighth meeting, which is expected to be held in May 2005. The budget allocated by the Conference of the Parties for the review is \$150,000, to be obtained from additional voluntary contributions.

Mr. Chairman,

All that remains is for me to thank you for this opportunity and wish you, and the other members of the Council, a successful and productive meeting.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.