

**Madame la ministre**

Thank you for this most gracious and generous expression of the support of the Government of Canada for the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

As we commemorate the International Day of Biological Diversity, Canada's announcement of the long-term commitment to the funding of the Secretariat is a tangible demonstration of the dedication of your country to the mission of the Convention: the preservation of Biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

Your generosity is deeply appreciated not only by the staff who have enjoyed – and will continue to enjoy - the warm hospitality of the governments and people of this country, province and city, but also the thousands of delegates who have attended our meetings in Montreal, and those who will be attending over the coming years.

On behalf of the Convention, I ask you, Madame Minister to convey our profound gratitude to the Prime Minister, your Cabinet colleagues and the many officials of the Government of Canada who have brought about this most generous initiative.