



**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO THE

**HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY**

18 February 2004

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Mr. President
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates

First, I would like to express my deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, and through you to the Government of Malaysia for organizing this high level segment and for the opportunity to make this statement.

Mr. President

This ministerial gathering takes on special significance since it is the first such event since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, in September 2002. This ministerial meeting is also being held as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the entry into force Convention. Thus, it provides an excellent opportunity to take stock of accomplishments and to provide an impetus for the next stage in the implementation of the Convention.

The World Summit brought to light the recent evolution in the thinking with regard to the sustainable development. One of the striking aspects has been the recognition that biodiversity issues should be at the heart of efforts to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication. This is evidenced by the recognition at the highest political level, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, of the role of biodiversity in sustainable development, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty eradication and the livelihoods and cultural integrity of people.

Against this background, the themes proposed for this ministerial meeting are highly relevant to the main challenges facing the Convention at this juncture. The commitment contained in the Plan of Implementation adopted in Johannesburg to negotiate within the framework of the Convention an

international regime on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits deriving from the utilization of genetic resources addresses one of the three basic objectives of the Convention. It is an issue which will determine, to a large extent, the success or failure of this Convention. You have the opportunity, today, to make a difference by providing the political impetus needed to launch the negotiation of an international regime and, thus, to follow up on the commitments made by world leaders in Johannesburg.

Mr. President,

On a related note, may I recall that in adopting the Strategic Plan of the Convention, in 2002 in The Hague, Parties committed themselves to achieving by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss. The objective was confirmed at the highest level in Johannesburg. Of course, this points to the need to focus on implementation of work programmes developed over the last decade as well as the new work programme before this COP; mainstreaming biodiversity in national, sectoral and cross-sectoral plans; and to develop a holistic and realistic framework to monitor and measure progress. This in turn requires sound scientific assessments and appropriate targets and indicators. The latter should be viewed as a flexible framework within which national targets and indicators may be set. They will define what we hope to achieve in the near future and provide ways of measuring our level of success. This will be critical in the pursuit of the 2010 target.

Another key to the 2010 target and, more generally, to the successful implementation of the CBD is the question of technology transfer and technology cooperation. Your representatives are discussing a draft work programme on technology transfer, which would complement and underpin all other activities under the Convention. I invite you to lend your support to a strong work programme on technology transfer and technology cooperation that will ensure

that all Parties have access to the technologies needed to achieve the objectives of the Convention at the national level.

However, we must keep in mind that while certain technologies present real opportunities to add value to the use of genes, species and ecosystems for development, there are also risks involved. The risks and benefits must be assessed carefully by individual countries when making their own decisions.

Mr. President,

Finally, as I indicated at the opening of the Conference of the Parties last week, 87 countries are now a Party to the Biosafety Protocol, and ratifications continue at a brisk pace. The Protocol provides a solid foundation and agreed procedure for the safe development of biotechnology, an activity of crucial significance to our future. The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, to be held here in Kuala Lumpur next week, marks another important stage in the Convention process. I invite those countries that have not yet done so, to ratify the Protocol as soon as practicable. In this regard, capacity building for the implementation of the Protocol is of paramount importance.

Mr. President,

May I conclude by inviting Ministers to rise to the challenges facing the Convention, notably as regards the 2010 target, and to adopt a strong ministerial declaration, which will send a clear signal to the international community of your resolve to follow up on the commitments made under the Convention and in Johannesburg.

I thank you for your attention.