



**STATEMENT BY**  
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**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**THE WORKSHOP ON BIODIVERSITY CORRIDORS IN THE GUIANA SHIELD TO  
STREAMLINE SUPPORT FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY  
TARGETS**

**KURUPUKARI, GUYANA**

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**Convention on  
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**Excellency,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am happy to extend a warm welcome to you all to this workshop on Biodiversity Corridors in the Guiana Shield to support the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It is especially fitting to be welcoming you today, 22 May, the day in which we celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity. The CBD declared this year's theme **Island Biodiversity**, which was chosen to coincide with the designation by the United Nations General Assembly of 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States to celebrate the contributions that this group of countries has made to the world. Guyana's linkage to the Amazon as well as the Caribbean region and its hosting of the Secretariat of CARICOM, make this venue quite appropriate to celebrate the International Day for Biodiversity and of course for this workshop that you are all gathered here for.

It is a true pleasure for the CBD Secretariat to be able to co-organize this workshop with our UNDP and Guyana government partners in this beautiful country, whose biodiversity, for the most part, is considered to be intact. In addition, despite having almost 86% of its total land area covered by forest, Guyana recorded a deforestation rate of less than 0.1% for 2012- an impressive figure. Moreover, Guyana lies at the center of the Guiana Shield Eco-region which, although it represents a unique and very exceptional part of the planet, its ecosystems remain understudied. Considered one of the regions with the highest biodiversity in the world, it provides unparalleled opportunities for conservation and protected area creation at a scale that is simply no longer possible in tropical Asia or Africa, and increasingly difficult in South America. With only a recorded rate of 8% of its total land in protected areas, Guyana has great potential to increase and strengthen protection and I am hopeful that this workshop will be useful in this regard, thus helping the world to achieve Aichi Target 11 of a minimum of 17% of terrestrial and freshwater areas and a minimum of 10% of coastal and marine areas under protected areas by 2020.

In 2013, the second phase of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative was launched where several Caribbean countries and territories pledged to conserve a minimum of 20% of coastal and marine areas by 2020. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity congratulates the countries and territories that have made these pledges and we stand ready to assist in achieving them.

You probably know that the Convention on Biological Diversity has always had a strong focus on protected areas. Protected areas are a vital policy mechanism and management tool to protect and preserve the world's natural, cultural, social and economic assets. The CBD Program of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) has been instrumental in advancing the protected areas agenda. The CBD through PoWPA and the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity provide a global framework for governments to achieve conservation and sustainable development goals. But the role of ecoregional approaches and initiatives are critical to achieving these goals and helping economically poor countries meet national obligations. In this regard, I would like to give special recognition to an important regional initiative, the Guiana Shield Facility, which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme. This initiative, working within the Guiana Shield Eco-region, adds value to national efforts in the area of biodiversity conservation, and promotes transboundary cooperation to address overarching environment problems such as transboundary pollution and fragmentation of habitats.

To this extent, we recognize the importance of linking local, national and regional actions to achieve global target such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. At the CBD we encourage these linkages through programs like the LifeWeb Initiative, which facilitates financing through an online clearinghouse and through participation in roundtable meetings, for the implementation of projects of national and regional priority and highlights these needs to donors.

Last fall in New York, I had the pleasure of meeting with His Excellency, Mr. Donald Ramotar, the President of Guyana, and we discussed the need to speed implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity

Targets in order to meet the 2020 deadline. We agreed that the development of a biodiversity corridor in the Guiana Shield would be a very concrete activity to speed implementation and strengthen cooperation between governments. It is encouraging to know that countries of the Guiana Shield are pursuing policies within the CBD framework that emphasize the importance of establishing biodiversity corridors to avoid landscape fragmentation and loss of species and habitats. For instance, Brazil is keen on setting forth a Jaguar Corridor Initiative that would incorporate the Guiana Shield Eco-region; the CBD reinforces its commitment to support these types of initiatives from countries. It is therefore heartwarming to have here experts from the countries of this region, as well as experts from WWF-Guianas, CI and IUCN. I hope that this mixture of experience fosters a fruitful exchange of views and coordination.

As you know, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets was adopted by the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya, Japan in 2010. The mission of the Plan is to “Take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity...” We know that achieving this mission and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will be challenging but achievable. Parties to the Convention have been translating these Aichi Biodiversity Targets into national targets as part of their updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. At this workshop we will focus on reviewing existing examples of biodiversity corridors within the Guiana Shield, as well as best practice guidance from around the world. Among other things, we will also focus on outlining priority actions for specific biodiversity corridor initiatives, the identification of potential sources of funding and the development of draft LifeWeb Expressions of Interest where applicable.

I would like to thank our partners at UNDP- GFS, Iwokrama International Centre and WWF as co-organizers of this workshop. I would like to give special thanks to the Government of Guyana, through its Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment for actively supporting this workshop as our kind host at the beautiful location of the Iwokrama River Lodge and Research Centre. I am sorry I cannot be there in person to visit this famous place! Furthermore, I would like to congratulate the Ministry for launching the Low Carbon Development Strategy which affirms that Guyana is once again at the forefront of innovative approaches to conservation and sustainable development.

As countries chart their own courses towards achieving the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, through the on-going revision of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans, they will be looking for the most efficient and innovative solutions to meet both their social development needs and biodiversity conservation goals.

*Excellency,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We are approaching the CBD COP 12 in October this year which will be hosted by the Republic of Korea. COP-12 will undertake a mid-term review of progress towards the achievement of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, to identify where we are in the implementation of the biodiversity agenda, and make course corrections as necessary. It is time to take real actions towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. We cannot spare any time, particularly where the results of actions take time to manifest themselves.

Let me take this moment to extend my wholehearted appreciation to our national, regional and global partners who significantly contribute to conservation on the ground and who further reiterate their support by being with us here today. Thank you for participating and sharing your expertise with us. For gains to be made toward achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, it will require strategic partnerships between the countries, the Secretariat, and our regional and global partners. We will work together in this spirit of collaboration.

I look forward to open discussions and concrete and practical outcomes from this workshop.  
Thank you.