



STATEMENT BY

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of the

BIODIVERSITY INDICATOR PARTNERSHIP TECHNICAL PARTNER MEETING

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**Convention on
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Dear colleagues, friends,

I am very pleased that you are meeting to discuss ways in which our ability to assess and monitor all facets of biodiversity can be improved. Your meeting has the results of the AHTEG meeting on indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity to build on. The conclusions of this meeting, held in Geneva last September, were presented to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its nineteenth meeting and, following a peer review, will be considered by at its twentieth meeting in April. In parallel, we have seen technical work on indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals and a call from COP-12 of UNCCD for the development of joint indicators for the Rio Conventions. All this means that there is a lot of momentum at the political level.

There are also exciting developments at the technical level. These provide opportunities to generate better information to support evidence-based decision-making, take advantage of synergies between different processes and bridge the gap between national and global data sets and indicators. So you have a lot to discuss over the coming days and I am grateful that you are able to dedicate your time and expertise to this task. I want to thank the BIP Secretariat for organizing this meeting and the European Union for the resources provided for the “Mind the gap” project, through which this meeting is funded.

As we are preparing for the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, we are taking stock of the information contained in national reports and national biodiversity strategies and action plans and updating information contained in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*. Regrettably, the picture has not changed: on average only about 15% of countries are on track to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets or the corresponding national targets. Moreover, in many cases, the national targets established by countries in response to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets either are less ambitious or leave out important aspects addressed in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. This means that we have to make even more compelling arguments for the inclusion of biodiversity considerations in all aspects of decision making. Indicators are one of the key tools for generating such arguments.

Mainstreaming biodiversity into productive sectors and into cross-sectoral policies is a key discussion point in forthcoming meetings under the Convention in preparation for the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Mexico in December. While mainstreaming has much to do with policy coherence, it also has to do with the use of common methodologies, data sets, models and indicators in different policy fields. If a forest department uses definitions, maps and data that are different from those used by the ministry responsible for the environment, then it is not surprising that there are contradictions in planning processes and that implementation will not achieve the desired outcomes.

I am convinced that the processes that have led to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the discussions on indicators for these provides an excellent opportunity to enhance the coherence of the technical information that supports decision making. The discussions on indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals have been difficult and are unlikely to end when the United Nations Statistical Commission meets in March and makes its recommendation to the General Assembly. It will therefore be important to stay actively involved in those discussions as well as contributing to the process of monitoring implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals over the coming years.

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to the work under IPBES on the methodological assessment of scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which will be considered at the IPBES Plenary meeting in February. The assessment provides guidance for the use of scenarios and models in the regional, global and thematic assessments undertaken by IPBES and these are particularly relevant for the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and the end-of-decade assessment of the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The assessment also notes the opportunities for enhancing the compatibility of scenarios used to support decision-making on biodiversity and climate change as a way to advance policy coherence and enable a holistic understanding of interactions between biodiversity and climate and options for maximizing co-benefits from action taken under these agendas.

I am personally convinced that good monitoring information and good indicators are an essential basis for good decision-making. On the other hand, the lack of data and information and a lack of understanding of the consequences of our actions for the environment and for biodiversity lead to decisions that we will regret in the near future. Undoing damage, for example through ecosystem restoration activities, will always be a costly and time-consuming proposition. We should therefore make every effort to avoid the need for restoration by bringing conservation considerations into our development decisions. Your engagement and your efforts in generating and communicating indicators are vital to reduce the costs of inappropriate decisions to future generations.

With this, I wish you a successful and fruitful workshop.

Thank you for your attention.