



Belgian intervention
High-Level Meeting on Biodiversity – UN General Assembly
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Chair of the European Environment Council
(only the spoken word prevails)

Mr. President,
 Mr. Secretary General,
 Your Excellencies,

There is no doubt - it has been repeated here several times - biodiversity plays a critical role in overall sustainable development and poverty eradication.

So, we share a common cause: to maintain biodiversity and avoid irreversible damage to ecosystems and their functions, in order to secure social and economic stability and to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, as well as the conservation of agricultural land are of key importance for improving food security. Furthermore, as the world population is growing, it depends also on the sustainable use of marine resources. We need to take all necessary measures to protect biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction and accelerate the implementation of the 2012 target. The recent scientific finding that the world's coral reefs have bleached due to this year's extreme heat, shows the magnitude of the problem. But let us not tilt towards pessimism.

COP-10 will adopt a new Strategic Plan. This has to be embraced beyond the CBD in order to provide an effective framework for implementing biodiversity commitments. This high-level meeting is therefore an unique opportunity to facilitate integration of biodiversity throughout the UN System.

Ladies and gentlemen, excellencies,

We are all committed to successful negotiations in Nagoya. To implement our commitments we must ensure the necessary means, including human, institutional, scientific and financial resources. An ambitious strategic plan as well as a process towards sustainable capacity and adequate financing for the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is of utmost importance. In particular by elaborating the indicators and targets for the Resource Mobilization Strategy, by supporting the integration of

biodiversity into financial-economic systems and by building on the opportunities provided by other processes, especially the UN Conference on Sustainable Development and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Financing of activities to mitigate and adapt to climate change should contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We should explore innovative forms of public and private financing, including payments for ecosystem services. We strengthen actions to reverse the loss of forest biodiversity. At global level we support the initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), and forest conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+), based on an active participation by developing countries.

A successful outcome in Nagoya will also depend on the results of the negotiations on the international ABS regime. We call upon Parties to demonstrate conviction to come to an agreement.

Also the establishment of an Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is of high importance. IPBES should be a tool to integrate biodiversity within all related institutions and actors.

We all agree that ecosystem services provide an immense richness. We have to make this economically visible. We need to incorporate the emerging knowledge in all processes relevant to biodiversity. I will persevere to promote the TEEB study and I will develop actions in response to it and encourage others to do so.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The EU and the global biodiversity 2010 target have not been met. Still, it remains essential to set a strong and ambitious goal to generate actions. The new strategic plan needs to reflect the full range of values of biodiversity and ecosystem functions, goods and services. It needs to encourage sustainable use as well as better integration of the economic value into policy frameworks, economic planning and national accounting.

The vision, mission and targets must be embraced beyond the CBD by all institutions, organizations and processes concerned to facilitate adoption of appropriate targets.

This is my appeal to all of you: we need urgent and effective action in order to avoid going beyond the limits of nature. If we have the conviction to give nature and mankind a prospect, we can't carry on with something like 'business as usual'.

Therefore, the scale of the problem must be communicated and necessary responses formulated in a understandable way to a wide audience, encourages commitments of civil society at large and fosters collective action.

As the chair of the Environment Council of the European Union, I will dedicate all my efforts to play an active and constructive role.