



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO F. DE SOUZA DIAS
on the occasion of the
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
22 MAY 2015**

“Biodiversity for Sustainable Development”

Biodiversity serves as a critical foundation of the Earth’s life support system on which the development and welfare of current and future generations depend. Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides are essential for sustainable development and sustainable livelihoods, priorities of the United Nations, especially in the context of defining and implementing the United Nations post-2015 development agenda. This is why the theme for the International Day for Biological Diversity in 2015 is “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development”.

Biodiversity provides for basic goods that are needed for human well-being, including food, fibre, fuel and medicine. It underpins all those ecosystem functions and benefits essential to human well-being, not only in terms of our economies, but also for our health, food security, prevention of natural hazards, and our cultural roots.

In the 21st century, conserving, restoring, enhancing and using the components of biodiversity sustainably can provide solutions to a range of challenges to sustainability and human well-being, including poverty eradication, food security, sustainable production and consumption, water security, disaster risk reduction and climate change.

For example, protecting ecosystems and ensuring access to ecosystem services by poor and vulnerable groups are an essential part of poverty eradication. In addition, biodiversity is the basis of sustainable agriculture, sustainable fisheries and sustainable forestry, essential to ensure food security and dietary diversity. Furthermore, the protection and sustainable management of forests and watersheds, for which biodiversity is foundational, are essential both to ensure water security and to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. Moreover, reducing deforestation and ecosystem degradation, promoting ecosystem restoration and enhancing carbon stocks in forests, wetlands, drylands, rangelands and croplands are cost-effective ways to mitigate climate change that generate other social and economic benefits. The list could go on.

We stand at an important crossroads for biodiversity and the well-being of humanity. Later this year, the post-2015 development agenda will be adopted by the world’s Governments at a high-level United Nations summit. As part of a mandate agreed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012, the new agenda will include a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Already in place is a globally-agreed framework for addressing biodiversity linked with sustainable development: the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010 and affirmed by Governments in the Rio+20 outcome document.



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The ongoing discussions under the United Nations General Assembly on the post-2015 development agenda also demonstrate this understanding that meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would contribute significantly to global priorities more broadly. Biodiversity lies at the heart of two of the proposed sustainable development goals and is reflected in the targets of several others.

We will not be able to achieve sustainable development and the goals established in the post-2015 development agenda if we do not effectively respond to the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and fail to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Likewise, we will not achieve these internationally agreed goals for protecting and restoring biodiversity and using it sustainably and equitably if we fail to mainstream biodiversity firmly into the broader policies for sustainable development and in the implementation of those policies.

The time for global action is now, by Governments, businesses, civil society, indigenous peoples, and by individuals. We owe it to future generations to ensure that biodiversity will provide them with the same benefits that we enjoy. That is truly the future we want, a future of life in harmony with nature.



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