



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

**INTERNATIONAL YEAR
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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

on the occasion of

THE FIRST AFRICA DRYLANDS WEEK, 10 – 17 JUNE, 2011, DAKAR, SENEGAL

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), at its tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties held in Nagoya, Japan, adopted the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020, and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In fact, the Strategic Plan addresses biodiversity loss, actions to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and benefits derived from biodiversity and associated ecosystem services regardless of the forum in which such actions take place. As such, it extends far beyond the CBD.

In Africa's drylands, a number of the Aichi Targets have special significance.

Since approximately 90 percent of the inhabitants of drylands live in developing countries, you might be interested in Target 2 which agrees to ensure that, by 2020, biodiversity values will have been integrated into development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes.

In North Africa, where at least 40 million people rely on biodiversity resources to maintain their livelihoods, you might take note of Target 4 which agrees that, by 2020, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels will have taken steps to achieve sustainable production and consumption and will have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Since drylands are the origin of a large number of globally important cereals and food legumes, such as barley, wheat, faba beans and lentils, Target 7 which commits that by 2020, areas under agriculture are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity, as well as Target 13, which ensures that by 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, is maintained, may be of interest to you.

Target 10, which commits to by 2015, minimizing the multiple anthropogenic pressures on vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change, so as to maintain their integrity and



Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada
Tel : +1 514 288 2220, Fax : +1 514 288 6588
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



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functioning is of special significance to Africa, since drylands have been identified as being one of the most vulnerable ecosystems to the negative impacts of climate change.

With one out of three of every assessed dryland species classified as threatened, and one of six classified as endangered or critically endangered, I would like to direct your attention to Target 12 which commits that, by 2020, the extinction of known threatened species will have been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, will have been improved and sustained.

Finally, considering that 16 percent of the population living in sub-Saharan Africa rely on traditional pastoral livelihoods, you might be interested in Target 18, which commits that by 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, are respected.

Urgent action is needed to ensure that all of the Aichi Targets be achieved in Africa's drylands so that such biodiversity resources and the services and values they deliver can be enhanced.

There is a Senegalese proverb which says : "Celui qui veut du miel doit avoir le courage d'affronter les abeilles." With the adoption of the Aichi Targets and the support of tools under the CBD such as the programme of work on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, we can achieve results, if only we accept the challenges we must face.

I wish you the best of luck in your deliberations. Thank you for your kind attention.