

Distinguished Chair of CSD 17 and 18, distinguished panelists and delegates

- The CBD secretariat would like to commend this initiative to convene a multi stakeholder dialogue, as a means of assessing the role of different implementing partners in advancing the implementation of decisions taken during CSD 17 and building partnerships to this effect.
- We would recall in this context that the Rio Conventions like CSD were the product of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and Agenda 21 and this context particularly welcome this opportunity.
- The secretariat of the CBD has always attached importance to the deliberations of CSD. The ES has made it a point to attend all CSD sessions and participate in the HLS. It would be important for sustained dialogue and interaction on CSD decisions, that the tradition of giving an opportunity to the Heads of the Rio Conventions to brief the HLS of CSD on developments of relevance to its deliberations, such as expert studies/reports, and decisions of COP-- be continued and strengthened.
- Specifically on the issues raised in the panels, I might highlight that from CBD's point of view the CSD 16/17 cycle were significant since the issue of agriculture is one on which CBD has some expertise of direct relevance to efforts to implement CSD decisions. One important example relates to the need to conserve agricultural biodiversity.
- Seventy-five per cent of the food crop varieties we once grew have disappeared from our fields in the last 100 years. Today, we rely on just three plant varieties—wheat, rice and maize – for over two thirds of our calories. However, as growing conditions change e.g. due to climate change, these plant varieties might also come under stress including the threat of extinction. Our reliance on so few plant species for food security thus makes us collectively extremely vulnerable and might jeopardise our quest for food security and sustainable agriculture.
- I take this opportunity to flag that the ongoing negotiations on an International regime on ABS, under the CBD, which is expected to be adopted at COP 10, will also make an important contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity
- My last point would be that dialogue such as the one initiated today should not be a standalone initiative but a continuing one if it is to be effective in delivering the results we collectively desire. In this context I would like to highlight that in this the International Year for biodiversity, the IYB provides precisely such an opportunity opportunity. UNGA resolution 64/203 in op 25 :
“Encourages all relevant organs of the United Nations, including functional commissions participate in, the activities envisaged for the International Year of Biodiversity, including through a special event or special focus in their annual high-level ministerial segments scheduled for 2010”
 - We are confident that the CSD will, in its upcoming session this year, through such a special event or focus during the HLS, find the means of continuing this valuable initiative, thereby profiling its contribution to the IYB also contributing the biodiversity High Level Event which is planned

for the 65th session of the UNGA on the eve of the opening of the general debate.