

Statement from the CBD Secretariat to the 1<sup>st</sup> Open ended Intergovernmental AHEG Group on  
the International Arrangement of Forests: Item 4 Tasks of the AHEG  
26 February 2014, UN Office, Nairobi, Kenya

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Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

The CBD Secretariat expresses its appreciation to the Government of Kenya, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN and the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests for the opportunity to address the Open ended Intergovernmental Expert Group under agenda item 4, as a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

Forests have always been central to the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Forest harbor exceptionally high levels of biodiversity and provide a range of ecosystems services essential for our prosperity.

The CBD Secretariat – and the Parties to the Convention – therefore appreciate the close working relationship with the UNFF and with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The celebrations of the two International Years: Biodiversity in 2010 and Forests in 2011, and of the UN Decade on Biodiversity have been catalysts in improving communication. And we are pleased to be working together now, with partners across the UN system, to highlight the importance of integrating both biodiversity and forests into the sustainable development agenda.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted in 2010 sets out internationally agreed commitments on biodiversity as well as means of implementation to achieve them. Five of the targets are particularly relevant for forests -- By 2020:

- to at least halve the rate of deforestation and forest degradation (target 5);
- to manage areas under forestry sustainably (target 7);
- to protect at least 17% of land as part of improved protected area networks with connectivity across the landscape (target 11);
- to safeguard ecosystems that provide essential services (target 14) and
- to restore at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combat desertification (target 15).

These targets support not only the extended Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity, adopted in 2002, but also the Forest Instrument and the Global Objectives on Forests.

Parties to the Convention are developing national targets under this framework, as part of their updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Later this year, at COP-12 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, the Parties will review progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and agree on any additional necessary action.

The CBD Secretariat has been privileged to work the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to develop a range of studies on forest finance, climate change and forests, landscape approaches and links to the broader development agenda. We have also worked with many with many members of the CPF, including FAO, CIFOR, ITTO, UNEP, IUCN, and the Secretariats of the UNFCCC and UNCCD to advance out common agendas through two series of capacity building workshops:

- on biodiversity, forests and climate change (REDD+) in 2009

- currently on ecosystem conservation and restoration in a landscape context.

This work has helped countries to translate commitments into practical actions that address not only the conservation and sustainability of biodiversity but also contribute to food security, jobs, livelihoods and broader socio-economic objectives.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

As a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the CBD stands ready to contribute to your discussions that shape the next phase of the International Arrangement on Forests and of the CPF itself.

We believe that the CPF has proven to be a useful mechanism to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues and to avoid duplication of work among its members. We believe that a renewed CPF could play an enhanced role in supporting the practical implementation of all the globally agreed forest targets and objectives, as part of the broader sustainable development agenda.

The review process offers Member States the opportunity to provide clear guidance on priorities that enables the CPF to define and implement an agreed biennial work plan supporting national and regional efforts for implementation, and also to identify sources of funding to carry out the workplan.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The international community has agreed ambitious targets and objectives for forests and biodiversity. In our view, we will achieve these targets and objectives only if we act together as partners, taking the actions needed to ensure that people and their forests remain healthy, resilient and productive for future generations.

Thank you for your attention