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**CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

TO

**THE COUNCIL OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
FACILITY AT ITS TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING**

Washington, D.C., 3 – 8 June 2005

Mr. Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates and guests,

I am pleased to have this opportunity once again to address the GEF Council and to report briefly on some of the main developments under the Convention on Biological Diversity of relevance to your work since your last meeting, in November 2004.

On scientific, technical and technological matters, several Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group meetings have been organized on various subjects, including the development of a draft programme of work on island biodiversity, the review of implementation of the programme of work on forest biodiversity, and the identification of gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory frameworks on invasive alien species. A consultation was also held on the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition.

The larger meetings over the period were the tenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing, and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The tenth meeting of SBSTTA was held in Bangkok in February 2005. Among the 13 recommendations it developed for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its next meeting, two aspects stand out: the first is the development of a new draft programme of work on island biodiversity, and the other is the progress made on indicators to assess progress towards the 2010 biodiversity target and the integration of sub-targets into the thematic programmes of work.

Given the shift in focus from policy development to implementation, the programme of work on island biodiversity is likely to be the last new thematic programme to be developed by SBSTTA for some time to come. The draft recognizes the uniqueness of island ecosystems and focuses on addressing characteristics and

problems specific to island biodiversity that make island ecosystems particularly vulnerable to almost all types of natural, technological and human-related threats. It suggests five goals and eighteen global targets with a view to significantly reducing island biodiversity loss by 2010 and beyond at all levels. The Conference of the Parties will consider the draft programme at its next meeting and is expected to provide guidance to GEF with regard to the financial support needed for its implementation.

At its last meeting, in 2004, the Conference of the Parties adopted a framework of goals and sub-targets, and a set of indicators to assess progress towards them. The work on indicators and sub-targets for the thematic programmes of work reflects the Convention's recent shift towards a stricter focus on measurable and tangible goals in a scientifically credible way. Assessing biodiversity change is not an easy task, but it is even more challenging to implement the agreed goals and targets. SBSTTA provided advice on the development of the indicators and began the work of integrating the outcome-oriented targets into the various programmes of work of Convention. It also recognized the need for capacity-building, and adequate financial resources, in order to enable for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement activities to achieve and monitor progress towards the goals and targets.

SBSTTA-10 also welcomed the proposed process and guidelines for the in-depth review of the implementation of the programme of work for the Global Taxonomy Initiative and endorsed the outline of the Global Taxonomy Initiative guide. The guide will have six chapters, and the chapter on funding for the Global Taxonomy Initiative will highlight various potential funding sources for taxonomy-related projects and provide relevant examples of such projects including GEF-funded projects with a taxonomic component.

In addition, SBSTTA-10 decided to establish an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change, and the Group will undertake a supplementary assessment on the integration of biodiversity considerations in the implementation of adaptation activities to climate change at all levels and prepare advice or guidance, including relevant tools and technologies, for planning and/or implementing activities to

address adaptation to climate change and that interlink across climate change, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and land degradation and desertification.

Mr. Chairperson

The third meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing was held in Bangkok immediately after SBSTTA-10. It continued ongoing work in such areas as the use of terms, other approaches to complement the Bonn Guidelines, and measures to support compliance with the prior informed consent of the Contracting Party providing genetic resources and the mutually agreed terms on which access is granted. The Working Group also started the process of negotiating an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, as mandated by the Conference of the Parties. It addressed the nature, scope, potential objectives and elements to be considered for inclusion in the international regime on access and benefit-sharing. These issues are to be further addressed at the fourth meeting of the Working Group, to be held in January 2006.

A series of meetings have been organized to advance the implementation of the programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions. These include: Asian Regional Meeting on the Composite Report on Traditional Knowledge, Asian Capacity-building Workshop for Indigenous and Local Communities, Latin American Regional Workshop on the Composite Report on Traditional Knowledge, African Regional Workshop on the Composite Report on Traditional Knowledge, Workshop on Cultural, Environmental and Social Impact Assessments based on the Akwe Kon Voluntary Guidelines.

Another advance on social and economic matter has been made on sustainable use and tourism. A group of experts were convened to develop a Users' Manual on the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development. In the Central and Eastern Europe, a regional expert workshop on sustainable use was organized.

Mr. Chairperson

Last week, the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP) was held in Montreal, Canada. To make preparations for the second COP-MOP, the Secretariat organized the following meetings: Coordination Meeting for governments and organizations implementing or funding biosafety capacity building activities; meeting of the Liaison Group on capacity building for biosafety; the first meeting of the Compliance Committee under the Biosafety Protocol; and the meeting of the Open-ended Technical Expert Group on identification requirements of living modified organisms intended for direct use as food, feed, or for processing; the first meeting of the open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and Redress in the context of the Biosafety Protocol.

Last week, the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP) was held in Montreal, Canada. The meeting adopted some 15 decisions, including one on matters related to the financial mechanism and resources. Good progress was achieved on most aspects of the Protocol, including capacity-building and the Biosafety Clearing-House. Specific guidance to GEF is expected to be developed at the third meeting of COP-MOP for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

In its decision on matters related to financial mechanism and resources, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol:

- Encouraged all donors and their agencies as well as the Global Environment Facility to simplify, to the extent possible, their project cycle requirements in order to expedite access, by developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and the small island developing States among them, and the Parties with economies in transition, to the financial resources needed to assist the implementation of the Protocol;
- Welcomed the continuing efforts of the Global Environment Facility to expand its support for the national components of the Biosafety Clearing-House as well as for development and implementation of the national

biosafety frameworks, taking into account lessons learned and experience gained from its initial biosafety strategy;

- Invited the Office of Monitoring and Evaluation of the Global Environment Facility to make its biosafety-related review reports available to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity prior to the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- Invited countries that have received funding from the Global Environment Facility for activities referred to in paragraph 21 (b) of decision VII/20 to report to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on actions being taken towards becoming Parties to the Protocol, and requests the Executive Secretary to compile the national reports that he receives and distribute the compiled reports to the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the Council of the Global Environment Facility for information;
- Encouraged the Global Environment Facility and the Executive Secretary of the Convention to continue their strong collaboration in advancing support to the implementation of the Protocol;
- Also encouraged the Global Environment Facility to further develop its funding modalities for organizing its support to the Protocol in a systematic and flexible manner;
- Requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility and with the Coordination Mechanism for the implementation of the Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to assess status of funding and promote coordination, coherence and synergies in financing for biosafety activities among donors and their agencies in order to facilitate the avoidance of duplication of work, identify gaps in funding activities and possible options to address them;

- Invited the Executive Secretary to cooperate, upon request and subject to availability of financial resources, with relevant stakeholders in providing advice, know-how and expertise in respect of development and implementation as well as oversight and evaluation of biosafety-project activities.

Mr. Chairperson

At its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties requested for organizing regional workshops as a catalysing mechanism to allow for the interaction of international thematic focal points with the national focal points to further enhance the scientific and technical cooperation goal of the clearing-house mechanism and to build capacities at the national level with regard to use of and access to new information technologies. In response, four workshops were organized: The Asia and Pacific regional meeting on the Clearing-House Mechanism held in Bangkok, Thailand in February 2005, the technical workshop on the development of regional Clearing-House Mechanisms held in Bucharest, Romania in February 2005, and the Latin America and Caribbean regional meeting on the Clearing-House Mechanism held in Brasilia, Brazil in March 2005, and Central African Sub-Regional Training Workshop for Key Partners of National Clearing-House Mechanisms in Bujumbura, Burundi in January 2005.

A meeting of the informal advisory committee of the Clearing-House Mechanism was also convened in Bangkok, Thailand on 6 February 2005. The meeting discussed issues related to collaboration with international partners and organizations, assessed the results of the independent review of the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity and provided advice on measures and actions to be undertaken to strengthen the clearing-house mechanism's role in promoting technical and scientific cooperation, including its role in facilitating the transfer of technology and know-how and capacity-building to support implementation of the Convention at the national level.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusions, I wish to mention the continued collaboration between the GEF Secretariat and the Convention Secretariat. The Convention Secretariat has maintained close contacts with the GEF Secretariat and the new GEF Office of Monitoring and

Evaluation. These contacts have enabled strengthened technical-level consultations, and are instrumental in exchanging views on guidance from the Conference of the Parties and clarifying issues related to responses from the GEF. I look forward to further collaboration in the process toward the achievement of the 2010 target.

Mr. Chairperson,

All that remains is for me to thank you for this opportunity and wish you, and the other members of the Council, a successful and productive meeting.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.