



Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

on the occasion of

44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security
(9 to 13 October 2017, Rome, Italy)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to address a message at this 44th session of the Committee on World Food Security as the new Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The biodiversity-agriculture nexus is at the heart of several global agendas including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the FAO strategic framework 2010-2019 and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. There's no doubt that meeting the increasing global food demand and addressing the loss of biodiversity are two key challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Too often these two objectives are seen as in opposition to each other. But the truth is that if we want to meet everyone's right to safe and nutritious food, we must invest in sustainable agriculture. Without protecting and using our ecological assets in a more sustainable way, we will not be able to improve productivity, nor improve nutrition.

The ecosystems of our planet produce our healthy and nourishing food, and biodiversity is the root of this plenty. The future of agriculture depends on the variety of life on Earth.

Therefore, in addition to SDG 15, which refers to ecosystems and biodiversity, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity contributes directly to achieving SDG 2 through many targets, such as target 2.1 (end hunger and ensure access to safe and nutritious food to all people); target 2.4, (ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality); and target 2.5, (maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species and promote fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge).

At the last UN Biodiversity Conference and the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Cancun, the importance of biodiversity for food and nutrition was recognized by ministers and head of delegations who adopted the Cancun Declaration. I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention the decision XIII/3 of COP 13, which includes actions on mainstreaming biodiversity into food systems, as requested in paragraph 109 (b). Please also note that the outcome of COP 13 was one agenda item of the 40th FAO Conference, where we were pleased to see that the FAO's Members Nations adopted the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform. The FAO Platform on



Biodiversity Mainstreaming will support the alignment of common goals and the development of integrated approaches.

I would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the Government of Mexico in the capacity of President of COP 13 for its leadership in moving forward the biodiversity agenda and congratulate FAO and its Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for the proactive role and the fundamental collaboration in reinforcing the integration of biodiversity into agriculture.

Also, I would like to congratulate Bioversity International for its new publication, *Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity in Sustainable Food Systems*, which will be launched at this 44th Session. This important work funded on scientific evidences has a great potential to strength the links between biodiversity, sustainable food production and nutrition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, if we want to feed the world, we need a transformation of food and agricultural systems. We need to reduce food waste and losses from producers to consumers. We need to call for an integrated approach to increase productivity in an ecological way. We need to achieve sustainable use of biodiversity.

If we want to improve health, nutrition and quality of food, we need diversification. We need ecosystem services and genetic resources. We need both traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge. We need to promote biodiversity conservation.

Meeting global food demands in a sustainable way is achievable, but this requires highly productive landscapes and other measures rather than the expansion of agricultural areas at the expense of natural ecosystems.

In other words, we have a big challenge in our hands: agricultural systems need to produce more and more nutritious food to meet global rising demands in a changing condition. And in this equation, biodiversity and ecosystem services are key to ensuring nutritional diversity, to increase productivity and adaptability, as well as to guarantee a long-term viability and profitability of food production businesses.

Thank you.