

# **Intervention**

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**Permanent Mission of Egypt to the UN**

**For the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Open Working Group**

**On Sustainable Development Goals**

**Oceans and seas, Forests and Biodiversity**

**Equality, Social Equity, Gender equality and Women empowerment**

**Conflict Prevention, Post-conflict peacebuilding, promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance**

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## **A. Biodiversity**

- 1- The critical role of biodiversity in sustainable development was recognized in the Rio+20 outcome, “The Future we want”.
- 2- Biodiversity, contributes directly to human well-being in many ways, and is also a critical foundation of the Earth’s life support system on which the welfare of current and future generations depend.
- 3- Biodiversity is threatened by land use change and land degradation, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species, climate change and ocean acidification. As biodiversity is lost, ecosystem functions are compromised, and, in some cases, there is a risk that some thresholds will be passed, undermining the functioning of the Earth’s support system.
- 4- The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) framework includes the biodiversity target to “reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss”. The target originates from the “2010 biodiversity target”. It was adopted, in 2002, by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and also by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as part of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
- 5- The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Targets provide an agreed overarching framework for action on biodiversity and a foundation for sustainable development for all stakeholders, including agencies across the UN system. Governments at Rio+20 affirmed the importance of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, emphasizing the role that the Strategic Plan plays for the United Nations system, the international community and civil society worldwide to achieve the world we want.
- 6- The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 includes a vision for 2050, five strategic goals and twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets, mostly to be achieved by 2020.

- 7- The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Hyderabad in October 2012, agreed on a commitment to doubling biodiversity-related international financial flows to developing countries by 2015 and at least maintaining this level until 2020 to contribute to achievement of the Convention's objectives. We stress the need to fulfill this commitment and to include CBD financing mechanism as part of sustainable development financing in the framework of the expert committee on sustainable development financing strategy.
- 8- Genetic resources are essential for sustainable agriculture and food security in developing countries, as well as for species survival and ecosystem resilience. User countries have a clear responsibility to address this issue. Biopiracy is a major problem in developing countries and flies in the face of poverty reduction measures. Much greater effort is needed to tackle this problem and sets out measures to protect the intellectual property rights for genetic resources and traditional knowledge in developing countries and regions.
- 9- "The Nagoya Protocol under (CBD) sets out key provisions for addressing biopiracy, notably on access and benefit-sharing. All countries, especially users of genetic resources, must ratify the protocol as swiftly as possible and take immediate steps to ensure it is effective, such as through binding measures on compliance. However, more needs to be done to strengthen the rights of developing countries.
- 10- "Ultimately, there is also a need to address the lack of coherence in the global governance system for dealing with the intellectual property implications of genetic resources. International IP arrangements, notably the WTO's TRIPS agreement, must be reformed to ensure they support the overarching goals of the CBD on genetic resources, rather working against them. One important step would be the inclusion of a binding regulation under TRIPS requiring patent applicants to disclose the origin of any genetic resources and traditional knowledge used in invention.
- 11- Biodiversity intersects in many sectors, and for each goal, the link to biodiversity can be realized at the appropriate level within the SDG process. It could be integrated into overarching goals addressing broad concepts such as poverty eradication, while specific biodiversity related targets and indicators could be integrated into Goals on food security and nutrition, water and health.

## **B. Forests**

- 1- Forests have multiple roles. Quite apart from directly consumable goods upon which hundreds of millions of families depend — timber, firewood, fodder, food, medicine and non-timber forest products — forests also provide other incalculable indirect benefits and services, including carbon storage, biodiversity conservation, and the regulation of hydrological, carbon and various nutrient cycles. Moreover, no longer can anyone deny forests importance to mitigating and adapting to climate change, combating desertification, reversing land degradation and increasing agricultural productivity. Thus, appropriate management is critical in order for forests to

continue to produce these diverse goods and services that are necessary for life and sustainability.

- 2- These benefits clearly show how forests are linked to many facets of human life that they affect, from hunger and poverty eradication to food security and employment, as well as protection of the environment and conservation of the biodiversity. In other words, it reflects the links between forests and the three pillars of sustainable development: Economic development, social development and protection of the environment.
- 3- In the African region, over 70% of Africa's population, especially rural poor, depends on forest resources for their survival. Moreover, forests generate an average of 6% of the region's gross domestic product. Eighteen African countries are among the twenty four countries worldwide that rely on forests for 10% or more of their economy.
- 4- Also afforestation is considered to be one of the effective solutions to address desertification, land degradation and drought in Africa. In 2007, African Heads of State and Government endorsed the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative with the objective of tackling the detrimental social, economic and environmental impacts of land degradation and desertification in the region. The initiative aims to support the efforts of local communities in the sustainable management and use of forests, rangelands and other natural resources in drylands. It also seeks to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well improve the food security and livelihoods of the people in the Sahel and the Sahara. The overall goal of the Great Green Wall initiative is to strengthen the resilience of the region's people and natural systems with sound ecosystems' management, sustainable development of land resources, the protection of rural heritage and the improvement of the living conditions of the local population.
- 5- Supported by the EU, FAO and the UNCCD, the African Union Commission works with thirteen countries and other partners on the development of national action plans and on project portfolios at country and trans-boundary levels using a multi-stakeholder approach. The partner countries are: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and the Sudan. Meanwhile, capacity development and communication strategies and plans are put in place, as well as a partnership and resource mobilization platform, facilitated by the GM-UNCCD.
- 6- Financing is considered to be one of the major impediments to the achievement of sustainable development. This applies to sustainable forests management as well. Therefore it is important to consider the necessary means of implementation to support the efforts undertaken by developing countries in achieving sustainable forest management. A principal element of our success will depend on our capacity to effectively address vital issues such as access to adequate financing, technology and capacity building. Building a strong supporting mechanism for the implementation of sustainable forests management in the medium to long term is a vital Endeavour that should not be missed, especially as human pressures on forest continue to mount with the growth of population.

### **C. Oceans and seas**

- 1- Oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and are critical to sustainable development. The oceans cover more than two-thirds of the earth's surface and contain 97% of the planet's water. The Rio+20 outcome document "The Future We Want" stressed the importance of "the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, including through their contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security and creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change." This reflects the strong linkages between the oceans and other priority areas currently under consideration while developing the future sustainable development agenda.
- 2- Oceans contribute to poverty eradication by creating sustainable livelihoods and decent work in fisheries and marine aquaculture, shipping and shipbuilding, ports, tourism, oil, gas, mining, and maritime transportation industries. Oceans are crucial for global food security and human health. They provide food and nutrition, directly through fishing and marine aquaculture, and indirectly through animal feeds. Oceans are the primary regulator of the global climate and an important sink for greenhouse gases. They provide us with water and the oxygen we breathe. Oceans have a role in climate change mitigation as they capture and store about 30% of carbon dioxide produced by humans. They absorb a majority of the sun's radiation and their surface currents redistribute heat around the world, thus enabling humans to live on this planet.
- 3- There are increasing, complex challenges in preserving and maintaining healthy, resilient and productive oceans: Unsustainable extraction of marine resources, marine pollution, ocean acidification and climate change impacts, physical alteration and destruction of marine habitat.
- 4- A broad range of oceans-related issues were addressed in Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Barbados Programme of Action. Oceans-related goals and targets can also be drawn from the MDG framework with its target 7.B of MDG7 and its two ocean-related indicators (7.4): proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits and (7.6): proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected. Furthermore, the Rio+20 outcome document contains several oceans-related goals. In "The Future We Want", Member State parties were urged to fully implement UNCLOS and the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement and other relevant international instruments.
- 5- In this regard, the following elements could be taken into closer consideration, which are based on the "The Future We Want":
  - Ensure conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources
  - Reduce the incidence and impacts of marine pollution
  - Prevent introduction of alien invasive species and manage their adverse environmental impacts
  - Address ocean acidification and the impacts of climate change