

STATEMENT OF HER EXCELENCY MARINA SILVA, MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF BRAZIL, at the Fifth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity "Ecosystems and People – biodiversity for development – the road to 2010 and beyond". Trondheim, Norway, 29 October 2007

Ladies and gentlemen

It's an honor and a privilege for me to be here in Trondheim and participate in a conference that focuses on the importance of biodiversity in combating poverty and in achieving sustainable development.

Our responsibility, as the last CBD Conference of the Parties was chaired by us, shows us that it is necessary to have a vision of the future and keeping as our long term goals the principles and objectives of the Convention, so that our children and our grandchildren can, as ourselves, be the beneficiaries of the enormous wealth of our biological diversity.

This is what I call our ethical responsibility to the future generations. However, this vision should be based on concrete actions and on political decisions that allow us to implement, presently, the objectives, decisions and agreements to which we have committed ourselves. Otherwise, the future will only be a recollection of our – not fulfilled - good intentions.

Nothing that threatens life serves the common cause of humanity and this is a paradigm that has to generate normative and political consequences. Politically, we cannot admit a retrocession in the progress already attained. In normative terms, it is fundamental to work with the implementation of legal and political frameworks that protect the biodiversity and the legitimate aspirations for development of the poor countries, the main holders of the natural patrimony of the world.

The Conference in Curitiba, in 2006, has given us the opportunity to make some worrying and challenging reflections on the low level of implementation of the commitments of the Convention. These are commitments that involve all of us, developed countries and developing ones alike, whose implementation is based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Now with less than three years to 2010 there is still a lot to do to achieve, even partially, the target, adopted by us in Johannesburg, of reducing significantly the current rates of loss of biodiversity. This is an effort that demands from all of us much more than what we have done so far. Therefore, I appeal to all of us to look, with a sense of urge and relevance, to the few years left until 2010.

Ladies and gentlemen

In the context of global efforts for the implementation of the Convention, there is a theme I would like to emphasize in a particular manner, given the meaning it has to the fulfillment of its three objectives: the negotiations of an international regime on access and benefit sharing of the genetic resources and the associated traditional knowledge.

Although benefit sharing is the only objective of the Convention whose results, 13 years after it came into force, are inexpressive, it is a theme that is still treated with much precaution and resistance by a major part of the developed countries. For the developing countries, however, the negotiation of this regime constitutes a priority and deserves to be treated as relevant and urgent, at the risk that we compromise, politically, the progress expected by all of us in the implementation of the other objectives of the Convention.

The title of this Conference – “Ecosystems and People – Biodiversity for Development” – has a direct relation with the necessity of adopting an international regime of benefit sharing that results from the access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. This is an essential step to be taken in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention and to contribute to the eradication of poverty and to the sustainable development.

In this respect, I was worried when I received the report from the latest meeting of the Convention’s Open Work Group on Access and Benefit Sharing last month. In this meeting in Montreal, it was worrying the lack of political will and consensus to make progress in the elaboration of the international regime, to fulfill the decision adopted in the COP-8. In some aspects, there was a true retrocession, which will make it difficult for all of us to come to Bonn with a significant progress that allows us to adopt the regime before 2010.

I insist in this point, because the theme of benefit sharing is missing in the agenda of this Conference, whose focus is on biodiversity and people, biodiversity and the eradication of poverty. For Brazil, the fair and equitable

sharing of the benefits generated by the use of genetic resources and of associated traditional knowledge is not only an inalienable right of the countries of origin of these resources, but an effective means of generating, in a sustainable manner, benefits that make possible a broader and better distribution of the wealth between rich and poor countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although the adoption of an international regime on access and benefit sharing constitutes one of the major debts in the work done so far under the Convention, the second meeting of the Convention's Open-Ended Work Group on Review of Implementation last July in Paris, saw low rates of implementation in most parts of the Convention. This deficit of implementation reflects the complexity of a theme that, more and more, is associated to the development issues, in its broader concept.

These issues are not new. A debate has been evolving on how to harmonize the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements with the global trade regime, with the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals or with the issue on food security.

A sustainable environmental logic is incompatible with an economic gear that is based on growing and choking social inequalities. The complicity of social injustice, with the prodigal consumption of a few, has characterized the 20th century and reached its saturation limit. It is not acceptable that the poorest countries and, within their nations, their poorest communities continue to suffer the main onus of environmental degradation.

The false dichotomy between environmental conservation and the economic growth tends to thwart the true mainstreaming in building public policies, so as to overcome the historical isolation of the environmental sector from the center of planning and decision-making of the State. The mainstreaming of the environmental policy in the sectorial actions of all government agents is a difficult and long-term task, but it demands a determined and strong starting point. This is the logic we have been trying to improve since the beginning of President Lulas' Government.

This strategy has been the milestone in Brazil for reducing the deforestation levels, which is no longer merely an environmental issue in Brazil and is now treated as an issue for the whole Government. In this sense, it is necessary to correct the idea given by some people, especially in the context of the

discussions on efforts to mitigate climate changes, that deforestation reduction is a challenge of low cost and complexity. It is not. The reductions of the deforestation rates demand fundamental changes in the economic model of some developing countries.

Thus, more than command and control actions, we are attacking the causes of this deforestation; in particular its economic vectors and proposing alternatives of social and economic growth that embrace the concerns and necessities of all actors involved in the process. This common effort of the many governmental and non-governmental actors, besides the political complexity, imply in the investment of significant institutional and financial resources, but it has already resulted in a reduction of over 50% of the deforestation rates in the Brazilian Amazon in the last two years.

In the international arena, as well, there is no other way than that of mainstreaming. The agenda of this meeting reflects this reality, when it includes such broad themes.

Among other themes in the agenda of this conference, the biofuels issue is one of the emerging themes in the international scenario. Brazil has a lot to contribute to this discussion, since Brazil holds an important accumulated knowledge in the area of biofuels. And Brazil recognizes that, despite the opportunity that his energetic alternative represents for many developing countries, this is an opportunity that only makes sense if done in a socially and environmentally sustainable way.

In the biofuels area, the Brazilian strategy is composed of several actions, emphasizing the cooperation with other developing countries. This is, by the way, a priority for Brazil. Many countries have been working intensely to strengthen initiatives of subregional, regional and bilateral nature, trying to take advantage of their experiences in the solution of common problems. However, the capacity to implement these initiatives is naturally limited, if the developed countries do not provide a greater support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One natural conclusion that springs from the observation of this agenda and of the participants of this Conference is that the role of implementing the commitments to biodiversity is not only the role of the governments, but also of the civil society. The main challenge of public policies consists in the planning towards the shared actions and building agreed proposals that aim to

the elaboration of a vision of the future among the different actors involved for the decentralization, the social control and for the incorporation of a multidisciplinary vision. In this way, governments, at all levels, and the civil society work for the conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity in a regime of co-responsibility.

The Conference of the Cities and Biodiversity held in Curitiba in the beginning of this year was an initiative that involved mayors of many cities in the world. The declaration adopted in that occasion affirmed the commitment of the local governments to contribute actively for the implementation of the three goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity and for the achievement of the 2010 target.

Another initiative that has counted with the support of Brazil, the United Kingdom and many other institutions aims to promote the insertion of the private sector in the biodiversity agenda. With the purpose of establishing consistent partnerships among all sectors, the partnership tries to make possible the development of market instruments and financial mechanisms in the benefit of biodiversity.

This is a fundamental step so that the enterprises can assume their share of responsibility with the environment and the society. I believe that the Summit Conference in Lisbon next month will be an additional step in the building of this partnership and contributing to a better comprehension of the competitive advantages of the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity. Associated to the role of the private sector in the conservation of the biodiversity, I would like to emphasize another theme that shows the clear intersection of the environmental themes with other sectors, the international trade of products based on the natural resources. In this point, there is a clear cause relation between the current patterns of international trade and the aggravation of the economic, social and environmental asymmetries between the developed world and the developing one.

One example of the unfeasibility of this model is the tariff escalation applied to imported products with more value added in the origin – this mechanism fosters the generation of jobs and income in the rich countries and condemns the poor countries to under-employment and the unsustainable exploitation of theirs biological resources.

The treatment of biodiversity as a theme of transversal nature also can be seen reflected in the agenda of and in the structure of international institutions, where the challenges include improving the coordination and cooperation among international organizations and multilateral environmental agreements.

There is a clear unbalance between the objectives praised in the agreements, which were negotiated with great efforts, and the adoption of the innovative strategies of cooperation based on the confidence of the fulfillment of the commitments assumed by each part: those who detain the implementation means and those who need to have access to them.

It was with the objective of deepening the ongoing debate on the international environmental governance theme that Brazil hosted an informal dialog to discuss this theme in Rio de Janeiro last September. In the meeting in Rio, many points of consensus were identified, especially on the perception of the environment as an integral part of the development process and the need for using this perspective for the strengthening and improving of the international environmental governance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Millennium Ecosystems Assessment concluded that the driving factors of pressure on biodiversity will keep the same and will increase in the near future and that we will most probably not achieve the Biodiversity Global Target for 2010. Unfortunately, it is quite probable that the scientists are right, but I believe that we can achieve important results if we work in an unified and focused way to reach by 2010 a significant progress in the processes and mechanisms that will be crucial to achieve the targets agreed in the near future after 2010. Therefore, I suggest a global pact to achieve the following ten feasible and possible objectives by 2010:

1. Consolidation of an international regime on access and benefit sharing;
2. Adoption of a protection system for traditional knowledge;
3. Approval of an ambitious strategy for mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of the CBD;
4. Significant enlargement of the CBD financial mechanism in the phase 5 of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-5);
5. Enlargement of the mainstreaming of biodiversity in global, regional and national public policies as well as policies in the private sector;
6. Consolidation of the national and regional Systems of Protected Areas, with mechanisms of financial sustainability;

7. Consolidation of sustainable forest management systems in public and private forests and with the opening of market access for timber and non-timber products with value added in the origin;
8. Creation of mechanisms in a global and national scale that values the conservation of natural ecosystems in private and communitarian lands, including the payment for ecosystem services and incentives for deforestation reduction;
9. Definition of a global and national adaptation strategy for climate change which focuses on the consolidation of ecological corridors and the protection of the variability of genetic resources;
10. Consolidation of a system of global environmental governance that articulates and optimizes the existing mechanisms and processes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is no more time for rhetoric, for actions dissociated from the multilateral efforts or for us to continue the game of attributing to the neighbors the greatest responsibilities. More and more, the impacts of our lack of action can be felt upon ourselves, not any longer upon the future generations. Act now is not a matter of political will, it is a question of responsibility, of commitment, of vision, of ethics and of survival.

We need to be prepared to face this challenge, as nations, as institutions and as individuals who are aware of their role in this debate and of their commitment with the planet's population, in order to ensure the right for a better future to all of us that are here now and for all generations that will come after us.

Thank you.