

**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE GLOBAL  
BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION FACILITY (GBIF), DR. NICHOLAS KING**

UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
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Madame Chair, Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates;

As we continue to negotiate a new climate deal, too little recognition is being given to the critical role of biodiversity. Biodiversity sustains all life on earth, yet we are seeing unprecedented losses worldwide. With a 2°C rise, we can expect to lose at least one third of our global species diversity by 2050 - compromising the resilience of our life-support systems, and thus our future adaptive capacity. Negotiations must recognise not only our underlying dependence on natural systems, but that they are our greatest ally.

Like climate, biodiversity does not respect political borders. And like the IPCC for climate, GBIF demonstrates that international cooperation in data-sharing enables understanding these changing patterns of biodiversity, enabling improved policy decisions and implementation. Most importantly, GBIF builds capacity at national level to enable countries to manage their biodiversity resources more effectively - modelling how forests will respond to climate change for example.

In this regard, all REDD-related decisions must recognise that forests are not just trees. *Plantations are not forests.* Forests are complex and extremely biodiverse ecosystems which provide a multiplicity of stakeholders with innumerable benefits, of which carbon sequestration is but one - and forests in their most intact, biodiverse state will provide the greatest benefits in combating climate change.

Modelling also informs on invasive species such as disease-carrying mosquitoes or agricultural pests, allowing pre-emptive allocation of resources for health and farming services - saving lives, empowering rural women and supporting the MDGs.

We cannot tackle climate change without tackling biodiversity loss. Indeed, biodiversity is our most cost-effective mechanism in both mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Costs of adaptation and mitigation can be reduced significantly by ecosystem-based adaptation such as mangroves as living, self-sustaining biodiversity buffers. The agreements on technology transfer, capacity building and financing must encompass the need for improved knowledge systems and use of biodiversity as our most effective tool in combating climate change.

GBIF supports the closer working relationships of the three Rio Conventions and offers assistance with common biodiversity data standards, which will greatly enhance effectiveness of their combined work. We urge those countries not yet benefitting from GBIF to take up this opportunity.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

*About GBIF:*

*Founded and funded by governments in 2001, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) is the world's largest multilateral initiative for enabling free access to biodiversity data via the Internet. GBIF's diverse Participants include 55 countries and 46 international organisations. GBIF also has formal partnerships with relevant international treaty bodies.*

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