The Hague Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity*

We, the Ministers responsible for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, having met in The Hague, The Netherlands, on 17 and 18 April 2002, on the occasion of the sixth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

1. Acknowledging the critical importance of biodiversity – the variability among living organisms from all sources and the ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems – that has made earth a uniquely habitable place for humans and that is essential to our planet and our well-being;

2. Acknowledging further that biological diversity is being destroyed by human activities at unprecedented rates and that the Convention on Biological Diversity is the foremost instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, and that therefore clear objectives and goals to halt and reverse this trend have to be set;

3. Noting the shift in emphasis within the Convention process from policy development to implementation and the need to put equal weight on the three objectives of the Convention;

4. Recognizing the need for clear targets and timetables as follow-up to the adoption of the Strategic Plan and to put mechanisms in place to reach these targets and review progress in the implementation of the Convention’s work programmes;

5. Recognizing that biodiversity underpins sustainable development in many ways; poverty eradication, food security, provision of fresh water, soil conservation and human health all depend directly upon maintaining and using the world’s biological diversity and therefore sustainable development cannot be achieved without the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

6. Reconfirming our commitment to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and underline the need to guide our actions based on ethical principles of implementation of the Convention towards the broad goal of sustainable development, based on integration of economic, social and environmental matters. We commit ourselves to move from dialogue to action;

7. Emphasizing the progress made in the last decade in translating the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity into national and international policies and concrete activities, including through:
   - National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in more than one hundred countries;
   - The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
   - The Bonn guidelines on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization;
   - The development and use with respect to all ecosystems of key concepts, such as the ecosystem approach;
   - The work programme on the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;
   - Guiding principles on invasive alien species that threaten ecosystems, habitats or species;
   - Work programmes on forest biological diversity, on dry and sub-humid land, inland water ecosystems, marine and coastal ecosystems, agrobiodiversity and on cross-cutting issues;
   - Increasing awareness that biodiversity is critical for the provision of goods and services;
   - Clearing-house mechanisms established at the Secretariat and at national levels to promote technical and scientific cooperation and information exchange.

8. We stress the importance of the contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the implementation of Agenda 21 and emphasize that at the same time Agenda 21 is indispensable for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

9. We reconfirm our commitment to consider the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources as essential for achieving sustainable development and contributing to poverty eradication. We urge the promotion of synergies between the Convention on Biological Diversity and related conventions and the exchange of experiences and lessons learned between countries and regions and all relevant stakeholders.

10. We regret, however, that despite the efforts of governments and relevant stakeholders the Global Biodiversity Outlook indicates that biodiversity continues to be destroyed by human activities. We underline the line the statement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations: "Therefore we must face up to an inescapable reality: the challenges of sustainability simply overwhelm the adequacy of our responses. With some honourable exceptions, our responses are too few, too little and too late."

11. We acknowledge that life is on the line and therefore resolve to strengthen our efforts to put in place measures to halt biodiversity loss, which is taking place at an alarming rate, at the global, regional, sub-regional and national levels, by the year 2010.

12. We commit to developing and revising, as appropriate, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans by the time the seventh Conference of Parties is held.

13. We reconfirm the commitment to halting deforestation and the loss of forest biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of timber and non-timber resources and we commit ourselves to the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s expanded action-oriented work programme on all types of forest biological diversity.

* This text is the approved, unedited UN text. See also page 130.
diversity in close cooperation with the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other forest-related processes and conventions, and at the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

14. We resolve to develop and implement effective and innovative mechanisms that guarantee the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the sustainable use of genetic resources, including the valuation and economic retribution of global environmental services, acknowledging that the rates of destruction of biological diversity will remain very high unless the countries and their peoples, who are custodians of this natural wealth, benefit from it.

15. We call upon the World Summit on Sustainable Development to:

(a) Reaffirm that the Convention on Biological Diversity is the principal international legal instrument for the coordination, consolidation and strengthening of efforts undertaken within the various regional, subregional and international biodiversity-related agreements and programmes;

(b) Reaffirm that States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;

(c) Recognize links between biodiversity and other policy fields in terms of policy development and implementation, such as:
   - The strong interlinkages between the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and sustainable development, poverty eradication and natural disaster management;
   - The achievement of biodiversity objectives into social and economic policies, programmes and actions, in particular when addressing the interface of sustainable development with trade and financial agreements;
   - Stability and mutual supportiveness between the Convention on Biological Diversity and international agreements and policies with a view to attaining the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity in a more concrete manner, in particular with the WTO, including the Doha Agreement, and therefore the proper recognition and status of the Convention on Biological Diversity within the relevant WTO bodies;
   - Enhanced coordination, synergies and partnerships at the national, regional and the sub-regional levels;
   - The ecosystem approach as one of the key concepts for integrated management of land, water and living resources;

(d) Reaffirm the commitment to have instruments in place to stop and reverse the current alarming biodiversity loss at the global, regional, sub-regional and national levels by the year 2010;

(e) Recognize the need for the intensification of basic surveys and research on biological diversity to enhance our scientific knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystems;

(f) Encourage governments to take appropriate policy measures to conserve and restore important ecosystems, in particular wetlands including shallow coastal water areas and coral reefs, as well as mountain and arctic ecosystems;

(g) Urge all States to ratify and fully implement the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the biodiversity-related instruments in place to stop and reverse biodiversity loss; and welcome the results of the process of implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity to enhance our understanding and protection of biological diversity and to promote investments in biodiversity, especially in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the Small Island Developing States amongst them and countries with economies in transition, to increase the level of awareness and technical competencies necessary at all levels of society to achieve sustainable development;

(h) Welcome the positive outcome of the United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002 as reflected in the Monterrey Consensus, which represents a crucial step towards achieving the goals of poverty eradication, sustainable economic growth, and promotion of sustainable development;

(i) Urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Product (GNP) as ODA to develop countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNP to least developed countries;

(j) Urge developed countries to achieve a significant replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF);

(k) Reaffirm the need for capacity building, the facilitation of the transfer of technology, the provision of adequate and predictable financial resources and the promotion and protection of traditional knowledge, including traditional knowledge, and sound science for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the Small Island Developing States amongst them, with economies in transition, to fully implement the Convention on Biological Diversity as an essential component for achieving sustainable development;

(l) Create and strengthen partnerships at different levels with public and private parties in all relevant sectors, including the banking and business community, international organizations and capacity building, the transfer of environmentally sound technology, the provision of adequate financial resources and the promotion of traditional knowledge, including provisions for preserving and maintaining traditional knowledge and sound science for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and to promote investments in biodiversity management and support the results of the process of the Convention on Biological Diversity to enhance our understanding and protection of biological diversity and to promote investments in biodiversity, especially in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the Small Island Developing States amongst them and countries with economies in transition, to increase the level of awareness and technical competencies necessary at all levels of society to achieve sustainable development; and

(m) Urge governments to strengthen their efforts to protect and promote biodiversity, especially in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the Small Island Developing States amongst them and countries with economies in transition, to increase the level of awareness and technical competencies necessary at all levels of society to achieve sustainable development and promote the objectives of the Convention in such programmes; urge countries to ensure coherence between the national strategies for biodiversity, the policies and strategies, in particular for (a) sustainable development and poverty eradication; (b) climate change and desertification; and (c) economic activities, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism;

(n) Recognize the commitment to halting deforestation and the loss of forest biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of timber and non-timber resources and the commitment to the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s expanded action-oriented work programme on all types of forest biological diversity in close cooperation with the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and at the regional, sub-regional and global level;

(o) Urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNP to least developed countries;

(p) Urge developed countries to achieve a significant replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

Courtesy: CBD Secretariat
to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and recognize in particular the specific role of youth, women and indigenous and local communities in conserving and using biodiversity in a sustainable way. In particular it is important to recognize the rights of the indigenous and local communities and incorporate, with their prior approval, their unique knowledge, innovations and practices in conserving biodiversity and securing sustainable livelihoods and promote their participation in the Convention process.

(p) Urge governments to undertake adequate measures with respect to their international obligations, including through the development of mechanisms for assessment and review of implementation and the establishment of compliance regimes.

16. We reiterate our commitment to the success of the Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which will be held in Bali, Indonesia on 27 May – 7 June 2002 at ministerial level and the Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 26 August – 4 September 2002. In this regard, we urge the Parties to constructively contribute to and actively participate in the process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in order to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, particularly those relating to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

17. We welcome the outcome of the Youth Conference and the Multi Stakeholder Dialogue, as annexed to this Ministerial Declaration, as valuable contributions to the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity and resolve to organize meetings of youth and of involved stakeholders in the framework of future Conferences of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

USA

Canadian Perspectives on Climate Change*

We appreciate the prompt response and openness of spirit which has characterized the exchanges we have had with you and your staff since last July in preparing for this event.

We fully share the shock and grief of the terrorist attacks of September 11 and share the sentiments expressed since by all.

We support as a nation and as a community, the efforts being carried out in getting to the root problems of terrorism and in eradicating its causes.

We welcome the participation of our European colleagues here today and in particular the presence of Wolfgang Behrendt, Anneli Hulthen, Alexander de Roo and our British colleagues.

We would also like to thank the staff of your Senate Committee for the work they have done in preparing this event.

Coming now to the climate change issue and looking at it from a Canadian perspective, we see a number of facts to which can be summarized as follows:

1. Canada’s Prime Minister is on record as saying he intends to ratify the Kyoto Agreement this coming summer, notwithstanding the efforts last week of the US Ambassador to last week who publicly called on the Canadian Government not to ratify.

2. Canada has a long distance to go in reaching its allocated target of –6% below 1990 in the order of 20%.

3. Canada intends to be fully engaged in emissions trading as trading as soon as a cap becomes operational. The US administration’s actions are not always sympathetic to that.

4. Canada has not yet incorporated in its energy policy the reduction of GHG emissions.

We are already experiencing serious anomalies in weather patterns. Thermometer readings are for several months now some 6°C above normal average levels.

We are beginning to hear grievances and profound concerns from industry, namely shipping, the insurance and the tourism industries.

Looking now from the other side of the border, as Canadians and as members of the global community, we believe we would be much better off if the US administration would decide to be inside the Kyoto ‘tent’ rather than outside.

We fully understand the current difficulties in Washington and the priorities that have emerged since last September which have required the attention of your budget makers. That has also been the case in Canada.

At the same time, we know from past experience with acid rain that American participation to such an agreement would make a tremendous difference in reaching the desired goals.

We know that the timing of the US Administration’s actions are not always synchronized with the actions and timelines of other countries and of the international community, particularly when it comes to environmental matters, as proven by the experience with acid rain. But we are confident that sooner or later, positive steps will emerge from your legislative institutions and your administration.

There is one point in particular that needs to be stressed today and it is the following. Inaction could be more costly to the US economy than addressing the domestic and international dimensions of the climate change challenge. There exist, even now, strong arguments to reconsider Kyoto membership. Emissions trading would be considerably more expensive for US companies because they would not have access to a large pool of tonnage at the lower cost made possible by the common market and liberalized trading which will exist amongst the Kyoto signatory nations.

For instance, Mexico would offer Kyoto participants lower price trading opportunities of emissions. As pointed out in a recent study produced by the Commission of Environmental Co-operation, the NAFTA commission located in Montreal.

In addition to that, there would be the odd situation affecting large US multinationals with subsidiaries in countries like Canada, Japan or the European Union, which would have to abide by GHG emissions abatement abroad while their plants in the USA would not have access to low-cost pools of GHG quotas.

Finally, there is the well-known fact that energy efficiency, energy innovation and energy conservation lead to lower pollution levels, lower costs of production, higher levels of competitiveness and other advantages. Last month when opening a CEQ conference on electrical energy in the US southwest, David Anderson, Canada’s Minister of the Environment, said that the USA could save the importation and burning of 2.5 million barrels of oil PER DAY if it raised its average gasoline burning standard to 40 miles/gallon. This would not only reduce oil dependence and costs to consumers, but reduce CO2 emissions by a substantial amount.

With climate change and energy policies, it is fair to say the global community looks to the US once again for leadership.

There are three pillars on which the climate change issue rests:

Climate change is an issue which binds us together, globally, north and south, east and west.

Climate change offers a unique opportunity in practicing multilateralism.

And thirdly, climate change requires the engagement of developing countries – notably amongst them India, Indonesia, the Philippines and China – and offers Western countries tremendous opportunities for the development and application of new technologies and innovations.

Finally, there is a need for closer bilateral (USA and Canada) co-operation on climate change, for example in research and development, mitigation technologies and a more formal exchange of policy developmen.