

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

- On behalf of my colleague Commissioner for Development Cooperation, Andris Piebalgs, and myself, I would like to warmly welcome you and thank you for participating in this side-event on the EU's Biodiversity for Life Flagship Initiative.
- As you know, the central theme of the High-Level Segment of this Conference of the Parties is Biodiversity for sustainable development,, theme which the EU warmly welcomes.
- As we already stressed in our statement at the Opening Plenary of the COP-12, *"biodiversity is a cornerstone for sustainable development and poverty eradication"*.
- The EU's overarching development cooperation policy strategy – "An Agenda for Change" – also echoes such interlinkage when saying that *"development is not sustainable if it damages the environment, biodiversity or natural resources [...]"*.
- EU development policy seeks to promote a *"green economy that can generate growth, create jobs and help reduce poverty by valuing and investing in natural capital"*. conservation of ecosystems and poverty eradication to achieve sustainable development are intrinsically linked and must be tackled together.
- EU support to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in developing countries is not new at all. The EU and its Member-States are the biggest international donor for many years and its aid has, for example, been critical for the building of a representative network of well managed protected areas across Subsaharan Africa.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

- The European Union has now started its new budgetary period, under the 2014-2020 Multi-annual Financial Framework. This implied the replenishment of existing instruments or the creation of new ones for the implementation of EU policies.
- EU's Development Cooperation Office, also called EuropeAid, has now completed the conception, programming and budgeting of the new thematic cooperation programme under its Development Cooperation Instrument, the **Global Public Goods and Challenges** – GPGC – a substantial part of which will be invested in environment-relevant cooperation, including green economy, climate change, forest, water and biodiversity.
- To give more coherence and more consistency with the "Agenda for Change", the GPGC will be streamlined through "**Flagships Initiatives**".
- Among these, the "**Biodiversity for Life**" flagship initiative – **B4Life** – will be the unifying framework that will encompass all EU-funded development cooperation projects and programmes which target biodiversity as a principal objective, with the aim of ensuring better coherence, coordination and visibility.

- Moreover, B4Life is also meant to enhance the EU's contribution to the resource mobilisation strategy for biodiversity, responding to the preliminary target agreed in Hyderabad in 2012 to "double total biodiversity-related international financial flows from a variety of sources to developing countries [...] by 2015 and maintain this level until 2020".
- In this context, development cooperation – also called Official Development Aid or ODA – alone, will not be sufficient. But even so, ODA remains a key contributor for helping developing countries develop and implement their biodiversity policies.
- Within the EU ODA, the specific instrument devoted to environment – the GPGC – will remain too small on its own to meet our collective commitment. One of the purposes of the B4Life flagship is to enhance the mobilisation of resources for biodiversity, also coming from other - financing instruments, such as the geographic programmes of the Development Cooperation Instrument as well as from the European Development Fund.
- Enhancing support to biodiversity from the “supply-side” depends on what the priorities from the “demand-side” are. In this regard, B4Life will contribute to raising the profile of biodiversity and ecosystem services by mainstreaming them in EU's development agenda, e.g. through policy dialogues which the EU holds with its partners.
- In this side-event we will tell you what B4Life is meant to be. We will inform you about the rationale and the priority areas of this initiative, as well as its outlooks toward the near future.
- You will learn that the B4Life flagship is a new initiative, thus expected to further evolve and mature. Starting as a European Commission initiative, it remains open to and would be strengthened by the involvement of EU Member States or other donors.
- Thank you for your attention. I wish you an interesting side-event.