



**MESSAGE FROM MR. BRAULIO F. DE SOUZA DIAS
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on the occasion of
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY
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“Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care.”

As governments from around the world prepare to adopt the sustainable development goals and targets later this year, it is particularly fitting that this year's World Environment Day is being celebrated under the theme of resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production. The well-being of humanity, the environment, society and the economy depends on the responsible use and management of the earth's natural resources.

Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides are essential for sustainable development and sustainable livelihoods. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are of critical importance to meet the food, health and other needs of the growing world population.

Underlying all the direct pressures on biodiversity is the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources generated by our present patterns of producing and consuming goods and services. Evidence is mounting that people are consuming far more natural resources than the planet can sustainably provide. Many of the earth's ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change, pushed by high rates of population growth and economic development. With a rising human population and increasing per capita consumption – by 2050, if present consumption and production patterns continue and with the global population expected to reach 9.6 billion – we would need three planets to sustain our ways of living and consumption unless there is a determined effort to make consumption and production more sustainable.

Currently, many individuals, businesses and countries are making efforts to substantially reduce their use of fossil fuels in order to mitigate climate change. Similar efforts are needed to ensure that the use of other natural resources is within sustainable limits. This is an integral part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Meeting Aichi Biodiversity Target 4 (by 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits) is of the utmost importance.

With increased global demand for food, fibre and fuel putting ever greater pressure on our ecosystems and biodiversity, reducing waste at all stages of production and consumption, including reducing post-harvest losses and minimizing food waste is essential. While substantial environmental impacts from food occur in the production phase, people can influence these impacts through their dietary choices and habits. Some 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted every year while almost 1 billion people go undernourished and another 1 billion hungry.

The key sectors of agriculture, fisheries and forestry need to adopt practices that minimize negative impacts, therefore making their activities sustainable over the long term. This question will be one of the top areas of focus for the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Mexico in 2016. It is essential that we achieve Aichi Target 7 (by 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity). Sustainable management not only contributes to biodiversity conservation but also delivers benefits to production systems in terms of ecosystem services, such as soil fertility, erosion control, pollination and reduced pest outbreaks, as well as contributing to the well-being and sustainable livelihoods of local communities engaged in the management of local natural resources.

Likewise, to meet the growing global demand for food and to end hunger, it is essential that we achieve Aichi Target 6 (by 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits).

As one of our most precious resources, water is extremely important to sustainable development. Excessive and wasteful use of water contributes to global water stress. At present, with human activities polluting water faster than nature can recycle and purify, and with over 1 billion people still lacking access to clean fresh water, achieving Aichi Target 14 (by 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable) becomes that much more critical.

There are options available for building a sustainable future. The recently released Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 included scenarios for the world in 2050. These indicate that very substantial changes from business-as-usual trends are needed to simultaneously stop biodiversity loss, mitigate climate change, improve diets and eradicate hunger. With the engagement of key economic sectors, it is possible to affect major changes in key areas such as food production, distribution and consumption and energy use, and thus reach a more balanced and sustainable relationship between human needs and the capacity of the planet to provide for them.

Living within safe ecological limits at all scales is essential for ensuring a healthy future. We need not destroy the earth to achieve prosperity. Living sustainably is about doing more and better with less. It is about knowing that environmental impacts are not a necessary by-product of economic growth. We can all contribute to protecting the environment by making better consumption choices. The earth's natural resources are, after all, finite. This year, as we celebrate World Environment Day, let us reflect on the importance of using our natural resources within sustainable limits and protecting biodiversity in order to ensure a more environmentally sustainable future for ourselves and for future generations.
