

CBD COP-13, High Level Segment
Special High-Level Luncheon Event: Biodiversity and Sustainable Development
Minister Kimmo Tiilikainen, 2.12.2016

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be addressing you at this event on biodiversity and sustainable development. I would like to thank for the invitation and especially our Mexican hosts for the excellent arrangements that they have provided here in sunny and fantastic Cancun.

- Respecting the carrying capacity of nature. Safeguarding the biological diversity. These two are the cornerstones of Finland's national strategy on sustainable development. It is called *Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development – The Finland We Want by 2050*.
- Starting point is that we are committed to implementing the CBD Aichi targets and stop the biodiversity loss by 2020. To make it possible, we need a mix of policies and measures.

I take the forests as an example, since 75 per cent of our land area is covered by forests.

- In Finland, we have protected 12% of the total area of forests by using different types of conservation programmes. The forest biodiversity programme METSO offers a good example of mainstreaming conservation. It aims to activate voluntary conservation agreements between forest owners and authorities. This bottom-up approach has been warmly welcomed by forest owners, NGOs, forest companies and authorities. As a result, there is a clear positive change of attitudes towards forest protection.

When speaking about mainstreaming the crucial question is how biodiversity is taken into account in the management of commercial forests.

- In Finland, the outlines for targets and actions concerning the commercial forests are brought together in our National Forest Strategy 2025. It integrates all forest-related targets that come from different international, EU and national strategies and programmes. They cover biodiversity, sustainable development, energy and climate as well as rural and regional policies.
- The implementation of the Forest Strategy is guided by Forest Council that has about thirty members and is chaired by myself. The composition of the Forest Council takes into account the three pillars of sustainable development. It has members for example from WWF, land owners and forest-based industries, as well as from the Sámi Parliament that represents indigenous peoples.
- Forest and timber certification systems cover many aspects of sustainable development, including environmental and social protection. Approximately 85 per cent of commercially managed forests in Finland are certified according to the PEFC or FSC standard. This underlines the responsibility of everybody and it also gives a reliable possibility to advance sustainability through consumption patterns.
- In overall, companies are important partners for Finland in management, restoration and protection of natural resources and the biodiversity. The existing Business and Biodiversity platforms are an example for creating public awareness and information sharing to companies about the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity. They also provide tools for integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into companies corporate responsibility work.

Mr Chairman,

- Biodiversity and ecosystem services should be portrayed positively. The conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity can provide solutions to wide range of societal challenges.
- Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and in particular that of Goals 14 and 15 contributes to achieving the objectives of the CBD. It is important to recognize these linkages both at the global and national levels. In addition, biodiversity considerations are essential in achieving several other SDGs directly or indirectly.
- I would like to stress the necessity to enhance the synergies between the biodiversity related conventions in connection to the implementation of the SDGs. This concerns especially the reporting frameworks and the work on indicators both with Aichi Targets and 2030 Agenda.

Mr Chairman, we want to strengthen people's relationship with nature.

- In 2017 Finland celebrates the 100th anniversary of its independence. As far as I know, Finland will be the first country in the world to honour its nature with an official flagging day. The Government has ordered that flags should be flown on Finnish Nature Day, on the 26th of August. This will be followed by hundreds of nature events around Finland. The flagging day symbolizes the fact that nature conservation concerns all of us and it should be a national interest - in every single country around the world.