

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,
CDE R.G. MUGABE

On behalf of the Government, the people of Zimbabwe and indeed on my own behalf, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Harare. The people of Zimbabwe are honoured and delighted to be hosts to this, your 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, being held for the second time in Africa. Our sister country Botswana hosted the Conference in 1983.

Ladies and gentlemen, this meeting is being held at a time when environmental issues have taken centre stage in all international meetings. We are all aware that the World Trade Organization meeting in Singapore grappled with the issue of trade and the environment and, in two weeks' time, world leaders will be gathered in New York to assess the achievements gained since Rio five years ago. Of significance, since Rio, has been the coming into effect of conventions that have direct relevance to CITES, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Ladies and gentlemen, some of the world's plant and animal species are threatened with extinction because of absolute poverty within third world populations, which leads to over-reliance on natural resources for survival, especially in the rural areas. Other causes are: loss of habitat through deforestation, and human and animal population pressure; the need to service the debt burden in the developing States where natural resources are a significant contributor to the Gross Domestic Product; and illegal international trade, which is now a multi-million dollar industry.

We in Zimbabwe have since established a commitment to natural resource conservation, as evidenced by the fact that 15 per cent of the country is under reserved forest and National Parks and, when one includes the CAMPFIRE areas, about 30 per cent of our mass is under wildlife management. In addition, in the last five years, large tracts of farmland have been turned into wildlife management areas called conservancies.

A number of Acts have been put in place to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of our biological heritage. These include the Parks and Wildlife Act, the Forest Act, the Communal Lands Forest Produce Act and the Natural Resources Act. Currently, my Government is working on a Biodiversity Inventory, Strategy and Action Plan which is funded under the Global Environmental Facility arrangement. This will enable the Government to implement comprehensive programmes for sustainable utilization and conservation of our natural resources. Zimbabwe is an active participant in environmental issues and, since Rio, we have defined our participation by adhering to principles that many are familiar with.

The principles of sustainability and inter-generational equity are the cornerstones to our environmental management. I am conscious that conventions such as CITES have been brought about in order to protect certain species from extinction. In Zimbabwe, the management of our environment and natural resources is fashioned to meet the development interests of the present generation without jeopardizing those of future ones. I am glad to announce that future generations will definitely inherit the black rhinoceros in this country as we are achieving positive growth rates in this area.

The principle of anticipating and preventing negative environmental impacts is less costly and more effective than correcting such problems. Countries in Southern Africa continue to suffer from a colonial legacy and land apportionment between the races that has devastatingly caused land degradation, deforestation, soil erosion and almost eradicated hitherto common species of mammals, birds,

reptiles and fish. To safeguard the future generation's right to resources, we believe in environmental impact assessments.

For the last few years, no development has been allowed to take place without an environmental impact assessment. In the protected areas, where most of our wild fauna and flora are found, any development must be preceded by an impact assessment. In our resort town of Victoria Falls, we have joined with our neighbours in order to look at the environmental impacts on present and future development in that area.

My Government is working with agencies such as the World Bank and other donors to re-plan all our parks and CAMPFIRE areas. A cornerstone of the new plans is the accompanying environmental impact assessment of the areas. It is this assessment that becomes our compass in the management of different species.

In terms of species, we are producing specific management plans on a periodic basis. During your stay, I invite you to look at management plans related to the crocodile, ostrich, black rhinoceros, elephant and other species. In addition, I hope you can visit some of the areas where these species are found. I am sure you will give sympathy to our struggle to produce better predictive environmental impact assessments once you see the different qualities of natural resources found in communal areas, commercial farming areas, CAMPFIRE areas, parks and forestry areas and conservancies.

It is well known that public participation is an essential element of an effective environmental management process. We know that where the public at large has vested interest in preventing environmental harm, the results are vastly improved.

My Government has introduced the CAMPFIRE concept – the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources. Our people, through their representative and democratically elected councils are now able to participate in wildlife management. They now understand the value which they derive from better environmental management principles since they associate wildlife and other natural resources with their own socio-economic development.

Sustainable utilization of resources in this country is not new. It is not strange that our people and the Government have to relearn their past in order to catch up with the modern world. Conservation of natural resources is closely linked to family totems. Where a family's totem relates to an elephant, and many totems in Zimbabwe are, the elephant becomes a sacred animal for that family. Thus totems are linked to fish, birds, crocodiles and other animals or natural resources. However, in all cases, there was never a denial of the possibility to derive an economic, social and cultural value from the species.

The CAMPFIRE concept is a philosophy by my Government that allows communities to derive benefits from good management of natural resources. It is a philosophy which is rooted in our strategy to uplift the standard of living of the rural poor. Natural resources provide the economic base for these communities. Land, soil, water, wildlife, fisheries, forests and other resources are better managed by communities that have embraced the philosophy of CAMPFIRE. I, personally was heartened by the petitions of support we received from all over the world when some among us here threatened the programmes run under CAMPFIRE which are funded by many donors. I salute the members of the US Congress who constitute the Black Congressional Caucus who have signed petitions of support for the CAMPFIRE

programmes. The basic philosophy is about humans sustainably utilizing their natural resources for the present and future generations.

My Government continues to ensure that our domestic law recognizes and respects international laws captured in the environmental conventions to which we are party. CITES is not an exception. In many respects, because of our concern for inter-generational equity, we have listed species on our own endangered list while they are not considered so by CITES. We believe that CITES needs to update its philosophy in line with the post-Rio conventions concepts.

My Government is supportive of maintaining the stance that the Organization of African Unity has taken recently on the issue of sustainable development and sustained economic growth in the post-Rio era. Any convention that militates against this is depriving Parties, especially the developing countries, of the rights of access, ownership and utilization of the resources.

May I, however, hasten to say that we are undertaking the task of protecting our natural resources especially of wildlife at great expense and sacrifice. The mobilization of the army, police, national parks scouts/rangers to guard against poachers is costly. In Southern Africa, wildlife is found in arid and semi-desert regions. Water for these animals is pumped at great cost from underground sources. Elephants, especially because of their huge bodies, consume large amounts of this underground water and, we believe, every species must pay its way to survival. We believe that the management strategies we have devised, if given a chance, will enable most species to survive.

We have benefited from contributions given by donor countries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from here and abroad, and more especially from our neighbouring countries, which have equally contributed money to protect wildlife. Our Department of Wildlife Management has been strengthened by the creation of a fund that is dedicated to financing the conservation and protection of wildlife. All proceeds from wildlife activities in Parks Estates go to this fund. In addition, some funds are voted by the Parliament to boost the conservation effort of the Department. I am confident

that these structural changes have assured a sustainable funding mechanism for the conservation and protection of wildlife in Zimbabwe.

We believe that a well monitored, evaluated and ecosystem-managed habitat can support our philosophy of sustainable utilization. And we invite the international community to cooperate with us and give assistance where possible so that our people can become beneficiaries of their natural resources.

There must be encouragement of sustainable utilization and development for those whose policies and actions uphold scientifically accepted standards, while penalizing those who abuse the environment. To refuse to accept the principle of differentiated responsibilities will mean doom for the international environmental movement and certainly disaster to the natural resources covered by CITES.

As the world becomes a truly global village, the division between the developed and the non-developed countries is sharpening. The environment and trade issues are indeed at the centre stage. This CITES meeting is significant because it is tackling the issue of the environment as it relates to trade. For us in developing countries, our natural resources provide hope for our great leap forward. Impoverished communities depend on the sustainable utilization of their resources.

Ladies and gentlemen, participants to this meeting will be very busy looking at over 80 proposals and over 60 draft resolutions. However, as you are talking about fauna and flora, which we have in abundance in all corners of the country, I invite you to visit our wildlife areas, as well as Victoria Falls, for relief, joy and relaxation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you fruitful deliberations and a pleasant and enjoyable stay in Zimbabwe. It now gives me great pleasure to declare this, the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora officially open.

I thank you.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM OF ZIMBABWE,
THE HON. CHEN CHIMUTENGWENDE

I would like to welcome you all to Zimbabwe, which is internationally recognized as Africa's Paradise, and in particular Harare, which, as all of you have now witnessed, is a sunshine city. It is gratifying that this occasion is being graced by the presence of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Despite his busy schedule, His Excellency has spared some of his precious time to join us today. His presence here is also a testimony to his support and dedication to the principles of sustainable natural resource development and utilization, which is the basis of Zimbabwe's strategy on wildlife management. His Excellency, the President is also a devout conservationist.

As the Chairman of the OAU, His Excellency is now called upon to champion on behalf of our continent, called upon to champion, among other matters, environmental issues. We know that environmental issues are linked to the issue of economic development and, therefore, His Excellency has a daunting task and we are honoured here that he is giving his first speech after his recent election to OAU chairmanship.

This meeting is being held in Zimbabwe on behalf of Africa. The financial, technical and material support we got from our sister countries for this is testimony to our collective hosting of this 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In addition, our environmental NGOs and the private sector have played major roles in dealing with the issues and providing money, logistics and material support. I therefore commend them to you, Your Excellency and the delegates in this meeting.

Zimbabwe has received the support of many other friendly countries that are represented among us today as well as international institutions. Their support is also highly commendable.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my singular honour and privilege to call upon His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe to deliver the keynote address and open this meeting.

I thank you.

ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE,
HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR NOBUTOSHI AKAO

It is a great pleasure for me to say a few words at the opening ceremony of the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. First of all, on behalf of the Standing Committee, I should like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Zimbabwe for hosting this important meeting. We are particularly grateful to President Mugabe for being present here to address the opening ceremony. This is a testimony to the importance that the Government of Zimbabwe attaches to the activities of CITES.

I should like to extend our warm and sincere welcome to all new Member States that acceded to CITES since we last met, in Fort Lauderdale two-and-a-half years ago. Since that time, 12 countries have become Parties, bringing to 136 the total membership as of today. This trend of constantly increasing membership indicates the importance that sovereign States attach to the potential of CITES as a global conservation institution.

With your permission, I should like to make some observations on the question of conservation of wild species under CITES regimes. As its membership expands and more developing countries join, it has become all the more important for us to address challenges confronting us in a new, innovative and creative way.

CITES is not an international convention solely aimed at the prohibition of utilization of species. It is a convention aimed at protecting endangered species, while promoting other conservation mechanisms – including sustainable utilization – to avoid that species become endangered. A balanced approach to all conservation mechanisms is the key to the successful operation of CITES.

The basis for such an approach is the principle of sustainable development/sustainable use. It is not an emotional and single-minded pursuit of one specific philosophical approach to conservation that should prevail here. It is reason, logic and cool-headed judgement, based on scientific data, which should be the basis of our decisions. In this regard, it is extremely important that the international community, both Member States and NGOs, change in their traditional ways of addressing the issues. We must have the courage to recognize our mistakes and failures in the past and take account of them in a positive manner for the future.

The issue before us is not North-South confrontation. There should not be the question of conflict of interests between conservationists and legitimate and traditional users of wild species. Conservation is the common interest of the whole international community, both the North and South, and people involved in both conservation and development.

In this regard, we have to keep in mind that, as one of the preambular paragraphs of the Convention says, peoples and States are and should be the best protectors of their own fauna and flora. While full protection could contribute to the conservation of certain species, the rational utilization of other resources could provide incentives to peoples and States to conserve these resources, because they come to learn about the social and economic benefits of doing so. Hence, the principle of sustainable development/use. This is the basic principle which was unanimously endorsed in Agenda 21 of the Rio Earth Summit.

So long as this principle is maintained, there will be no loss for anyone involved. On the contrary, it is a gain for the whole international community.

One of the reproaches addressed against CITES is that it has not always lived up to its promises. As you recall, when the African elephant was listed in Appendix I in 1989, the so-called "Somalia Amendment" called for a re-evaluation of certain populations of the African elephant based on the recommendations of a Panel of Experts. Since this decision was made, in two instances, the Panel of Experts made recommendations which were rejected or even ignored. This meeting is the third such occasion. I believe it is time to objectively and thoroughly review the situation on the basis of the report of the Panel of Experts, and make a decision which will contribute to the maintenance of the credibility of CITES. Our Convention must live up to its commitments.

For this meeting, there are many proposals for the new listing, uplisting and downlisting of various species. Our decisions on these important issues must be based not on emotion but on credible scientific findings, on the respect for culture and traditions, and on the recognition of the different values guiding the world societies.

The conservation of wildlife resources, while carrying the necessity to be flexible, needs to be based on fundamental principles that shall not vary from one species to another, from one country to another, and from one culture to another. We must avoid double standards in our approach.

The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties is taking place in Africa, which is abundant in various species – species which are crucial for both conservation and sustainable development. It provides a good opportunity for us to prove that CITES is a truly credible multilateral convention, functioning on a firm foundation of respect and tolerance.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MR JORGE ILLUECA,
ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP

It is my pleasure to address you on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Ms Elizabeth Dowdeswell, who is not with us owing to the celebration of the World Environment Day, which this year was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

I would first like to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency President Mugabe and the people of Zimbabwe for their hospitality and generosity in hosting this 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. As one of only two global United Nations organizations headquartered in the developing world, both of which are based in Nairobi, Kenya, UNEP is particularly delighted that this meeting is being held on our home continent of Africa, particularly since it is here that many of the pressing issues of CITES need to be urgently addressed.

The underlying reason for environmental degradation is the lack of a clear vision of the catalytic, symbiotic and synergistic linkages between environment and development in respect of local and/or global actions taken in the fields of environment and development.

The just-concluded Dialogue of African Elephant Range States, which commenced in Dakar, Senegal, in November 1996 and ended last Friday night in Darwendale, Zimbabwe, as well as the Seventh Global Biodiversity Forum held here in Harare, have greatly helped to identify and clarify such critical linkages and synergies, particularly as they relate to both CITES and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Some very exciting exchanges of views took place during these two meetings, which produced thought-provoking insights, conclusions and recommendations. They are all aimed at facilitating meaningful progress by this meeting of Conference of the Parties towards the formulation of an equitable and sustainable use of wild fauna and flora.

This Conference of Parties has the opportunity to chart the critical path leading to a conservation and sustainable use ethic that must guarantee that there are no consequential adverse impacts as outcomes of its decisions. The meeting should provide a global consensus on procedures and principles of equity and fairness to all Contracting Parties.

The 38th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee was held this weekend immediately before this meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Under the able leadership of Ambassador Nobutoshi Akao, Chairman of the Standing Committee, solid foundations have been set for a successful 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES. We in UNEP are particularly pleased with the substantial progress that was made over the weekend in the formulation of a new Agreement between the CITES Standing Committee and the Executive Director of UNEP for improving the provision of the CITES Secretariat, which we feel will lead to enhanced implementation of CITES. The signing of this agreement will be a major achievement of this meeting of the Parties. Most importantly, it will signal the beginning of a new era of co-operation between CITES and the United Nations Environment Programme. UNEP is looking beyond the provision of administrative services to the Secretariat; it is looking to support the programmatic work of CITES, particularly by exploring and developing linkages with other global agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species and relevant regional conventions.

The signing of a new Agreement between UNEP and the CITES Standing Committee at this CoP will be the culmination of a process that began in February 1996. We in UNEP deeply appreciate the contributions of all the members of the working group of the Standing Committee that was created to address this issue. Special recognition should be given to the representatives of Argentina, Japan, Namibia, Senegal, Switzerland and the United States of America, as well as the United Kingdom which joined us over the weekend.

Before closing, Mr Chairman, I also want to express our congratulations to the Secretary General and all of the staff of the CITES Secretariat for their unbending dedication and boundless energy in organizing this meeting which I am confident will be successful.

Once again, Mr Chairman, I wish to reiterate UNEP's gratitude to President Mugabe and the people of Zimbabwe for their hospitality, and I wish you and all the delegates and NGO participants a fruitful and successful meeting.

Thank you very much.

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF CITES,
MR IZGREV TOPKOV

Allow me on behalf of the CITES Secretariat, which in accordance with Article XII 2(a) arranges for and services the meetings of the Parties, to extend to you warmest and most heartfelt welcome to this 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.

Almost 25 years ago, delegates from 80 countries negotiated in Washington, D.C., a new multilateral environmental agreement – CITES – with the firm goal to protect threatened species of wild fauna and flora from the negative effects of international trade and to establish a global system that would ensure that such a trade in other species takes place on a sustainable basis. These two goals are undoubtedly even more relevant now than in the early seventies.

Today, for the second time in its history the supreme body of our treaty, the 138 strong Conference of the Parties comes back to Africa. A special welcome to the newest members of our family whose membership will become effective in July – Jamaica and Yemen.

We have not even started yet, but this already is a meeting of many records. I am very proud to announce that according to the latest data, of an hour ago, subject to later corrections we have a confirmed participation of 96.3 per cent of all Parties – the highest figure in history. Another one: for the first time in many years we have more delegates than observers – not that you will hear less from them.

As far as the third record is concerned, however, I have very serious doubts that, although it is absolute, a Guinness-Book type, it deserves to go into our 'brag-sheet', in spite of the fact that we speak exactly about sheets. I have in mind the four million pages of documentation up to now. More than three thousand per set. No comment.

This is with what we, as I said, come back to this region so rich in wildlife, to the green continent of Africa, to the beauty of Hwange wilderness and the roar of its lions, to the roar of the Zambezi at the Falls and the beauty of the herons wading in it.

I do hope you will find the time to enjoy all this in spite of the overcrowded agenda and the importance of the problems to be discussed.

Many, as you know, already say that this – so to say jubilee – 10th meeting is probably going to be the most difficult ever. This may be true. The whole world today is much more diversified, multi-centred and complex. And each multilateral environmental agreement such as CITES reflects naturally this ever-increasing complexity in its own field.

The sheer numbers – participants, volumes, area – involved in the international trade in wildlife demand much bigger efforts, funds, co-operation, pose new problems.

This is what we gather for in Harare: to make our efforts more efficient, to look for adequate funding, to improve the relations between all players in the field, including the entities ensuing from the Uruguay round, in order not only to identify the problems, but above all to find the solutions. The task is difficult, but rewarding, to lay a smooth passage from the past to the future, from the adolescence and physical growth of CITES, both in geographical and species coverage, to the mature partnership of the post-Rio era. Being 25 years old, mature and responsible the CITES family can achieve this by channelling the emotions into a constructive dialogue, characterized by the strength of the argument, by openness and positivism.

This is valid:

- for the whole process of careful introverted examination, which will be undertaken from today under the tens of sub-items aimed at streamlining the soft law and reinforcing all the instruments for effective implementation and uncompromising enforcement, unblurred by bureaucratic barriers;
- for the development of an undated, strengthened vision with ambitious long- and medium-term goals which would draw on past experience and are based on the very good, stable traditions, on the recognized and confirmed cornerstones of the treaty, while also taking into account the great changes of the last decades, the vastly increased interdependence of all partners, the new structures such as WTO and GEF, as well as the communications revolution;
- for the approving of real and effective measures that would make the agenda of our meetings shorter and would radically diminish the documentation load, which now have become financially and otherwise unbearable. May be exactly here the electronic era will prove to be of greatest help.

In addition to all this, constructive dialogue and positivism is especially needed for the discussions on the amendment proposals. Eighty-nine taxa are under consideration. Admittedly, some of these will again steal the limelight. But greater emotions should not mean less solid argumentation and less care for the long-term needs of the local communities, especially in the range States. Let's do our best to ensure a balance of interest, to continue building the bridges connecting range and consumer States, science and economic benefit, care for the development of each town and village and care of the beauty and abundance of Nature, symbolized by the lovely animals with which our hosts adorned this magnificent Conference Centre.

You have to discuss the strategically important timber and marine species, you have everything: bears and medicinal plants, the elephant and tiny birds. They all do deserve your equal treatment.

This is especially true for the media men and that is why I am now launching a personal prize to that brave journalist from a consumer country who will write an article or make a film for species from the proposals that has never been the subject of a media exercise.

The Secretariat in good faith tried to assist the delegates with pre-conference documents and opinion, based on the available data and the criteria laid down in Resolution Conf. 9.24.

This, however, is your meeting dear delegates. It is your united effort, your sovereign political will and yours alone that shall chart the future and determine the final result.

The spirit of Kyoto and Fort Lauderdale, which I believe will prevail here too, the sincere strong wish to achieve together in a common front marching ahead the two goals of the treaty, conservation and sustainability, will help tremendously.

And the disarming hospitality of our hosts, the dedication and the extraordinary efforts of the organizing committee, the rangers from the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management, the Government and the people of Zimbabwe to provide, with the assistance of generous donor States and organizations, the best possible conditions for all participants, will also immensely facilitate the proceedings of our meeting, as they helped its preparation.

Please allow me, Mr President, Sir, to express on behalf of all of us gathered in this hall, most heartfelt thanks to you personally for your unswerving support, for your tremendous engagement in the fight for the noble cause of our Convention, for finding time, time of a very highly respected leader, recognized not only in Africa but in the whole world, to personally come and open the meeting. *Tatenda Chaizvo*.

The words with which I finished my closing speech in Fort Lauderdale were the following:

"What are we going to say in 1997, answering the questions the kids posed to us. Shall we be still split

and trying to hide from the ecological catastrophes in exclusive ego-systems, or we are going to do our best to make the whole planet a cosy-for-all, humming-with-life ecosystem?"

Dear Participants, do your best to give the answers, to give fewer resolutions and more solutions. The kids wait for them. The CITES Secretariat, as always, is totally at your disposal and will do its best to assist you.

It's your turn now. The floor is open and the lights are on.

Thank you. And best of luck.

ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP,
PROFESSOR REUBEN J. OLEMBO

I am delighted to be here in Harare and to make a statement to you on behalf of Ms Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Executive Director of UNEP, who could not be here personally as a result of an urgent development in the United Nations regarding proposals for reforms by the Secretary General and which commanded her personal attention. I am personally honoured to renew long-standing friendships with many in this ever-expanding CITES family.

On her behalf, I would like to express UNEP's deep gratitude to the Government of Zimbabwe for hosting this meeting and for the warmth and generosity of their welcome. We are particularly grateful to His Excellency, President Robert Mugabe for officially opening this 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an exciting and unique convention, and the mother of all global environmental conventions. A shared history in wildlife conservation created CITES 22 years ago and a commitment to the maintenance of a healthy environment and a pledge of continuity to all forms of life on Earth have so far held this Convention together.

Just a fortnight ago, the global community came together to celebrate the World Environment Day around the theme "For Life on Earth". It is a theme that is common to all governments, to all people, to all cultures and it echoes the objectives of this very special convention. It is the message of the sanctity of Life on Earth. Clearly, the message of sanctity of all life on Earth should find expression in all our actions: in understanding that human wealth and economic development ultimately derive from and depend upon the resources of the Earth; in seeing economic development and care for the environment as compatible, interdependent and necessary; in knowing that economic development can help solve environmental problems only if it is accompanied by an attitude of responsibility and stewardship for the Earth; and in knowing that the key to socially sustainable development is the participation, organization, education and empowerment of people.

Whatever we do or fail to do has immense influence on the nature and future of Life on Earth. By throwing our collective weight onto the scales of history on the proper side, the balance is decisively tipped in favour of a healthy environment, a vibrant biosphere, which can sustain ALL Life on Earth, most of which is defenceless, voiceless, speechless in the face of humankind's mighty and haughty onslaught with swords and bullets and other gadgets.

I doubt that there has been a time in the last 30 years (that is to say, in the entire lifespan of both UNEP and CITES) when the intended impacts of human activity on the biosphere and particularly its biodiversity was greater. Yet the intensity will grow. Extrapolation of recent global environmental trends reveals that the impact of human activity will continue to escalate owing to increasing habitat/ecosystem fragmentation, rapid human population growth and unsustainable consumption tastes, patterns and lifestyles.

Looking ahead to the year 2050, what kind of pressure will humankind exert on the biosphere? It is estimated that, by the year 2050, there will be 11 billion people to be fed, clothed, sheltered and assured of a healthy environment. That is double the current figure of 5.5 billion people. To cater to the needs of these additional 6 billion people is a challenge of monumental complexity. And this challenge can not be met without adopting new and viable strategies and technologies, which embody the ethic of sustainability in our production and consumption patterns.

Today the global community, most importantly the owners, the custodians and indeed all the stakeholders in the field of biodiversity conservation, recognize this dilemma as a reality to be addressed. The required doubling, perhaps tripling, of the world supply of food, fuel, fibre, shelter and pharmaceuticals by the year 2050 can not be achieved without a contribution into the national economies from the biotic wealth of the biosphere.

However, the benefits to be derived from tapping this biotic wealth must be obtained in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner, and be shared equitably among all 'beings' of the ecosystems, not just among the human beings. The Conference of the Parties of this Convention has the duty and responsibility to chart the critical path that leads to a tenable and equitable conservation and sustainable use ETHIC which GUARANTEES that there are no consequential adverse impacts to ecosystems as outcomes of the Conference Resolutions and Decisions. These Resolutions and Decisions should themselves, in turn, be based on procedures and principles founded on equity and fairness to all Contracting Parties. It is only through judicious adoption and application of sound biodiversity strategies, programmes and action plans that significant benefits will accrue to society.

One lesson that should emerge from this 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties is that the basis for a wholesome interpretation and implementation of CITES provisions, obligations and Conference Resolutions must reside in the EQUITY and SUSTAINABILITY debate – whether the issue is consumptive or non-consumptive utilization; or trade impact. In view of our rather incomplete scientific knowledge (particularly regarding marine species) of the resilience of the ecosystems and the functioning of the biosphere, our determination of the sustainability of any given human interventions should be approached with logical consistency, the maximum possible technical competence and a high degree of judicious urgency, and should NOT be based merely on human expedience, if we truly wish to secure the integrity and health of the ecosystems involved.

This meeting of the Conference of the Parties was faced with a number of critical issues: the evolution of the Convention and maximizing its effectiveness; a gamut of species issues – from the turtles and the sturgeon, the tigers and the bears, the songbirds and the swiftlets, the vicuña and the hybrids, the sharks and the whales, to the rhinoceroses and the elephant; and finally, the perennial budgetary questions. Score cards are already out there to assess your performance, but let me touch on one or two of these issues briefly.

As inscribed in Articles XI and XII of the Convention, UNEP has had a very special relationship with this Convention since its inception. For many years, our services as Secretariat provider and guarantor of the Convention were carried ad hoc and pragmatically. However, as the Convention continued to grow and issues became more complex, effort has been expended in getting this relationship formalized. The Conference of the Parties has just endorsed the revised Agreement between the Standing Committee and the Executive Director of UNEP. I believe the comprehensiveness of this Agreement augurs well for the healthy development, efficiency and effectiveness of the Convention; for CITES must indeed undergo a process of dynamic evolution. In this it must be duly guided through emerging issues by the collective wisdom of the Conference of the Parties and the institutional insights and comparative strengths of UNEP in the field of environment. CITES must forge and cement the necessary linkages, relationships and

synergies with all major biodiversity-related conventions and other legal entities, both global and regional (many of which are serviced by UNEP) such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, the RAMSAR Convention, the International Whaling Commission, the ITTO and the WTO, to name but a few. The complementarities and synergies of these conventions or legal entities should be fully explored and exploited to make CITES more effective and relevant to the needs of the Contracting Parties as the challenges of the 21st century emerge. In fact, and pursuant to mandates arising from Agenda 21 and the Commission on Sustainable Development, and within the context of the current debate on UN Reform, UNEP has been asked to provide governments a thorough analysis and strategy of how effective co-ordination of all these conventions can be promoted in order to bring about better synergy, effectiveness (both substantively and financially) and efficiencies.

Enforcement capacity is a major factor in the effectiveness of CITES. In view of the increased volume of trade as well as the increased sophistication of the illegal traffickers, the high level of alleged/reported infractions could mean an increased level of vigilance by Parties that are detecting and duly reporting the incidents, particularly in their efforts to find ways and means to control the movement of rare and endangered plant specimens in the luggage of millions of travellers at sea, in the air and/or on land, across borders and to deter unscrupulous merchants. The question of enforcement capacity is high on UNEP's Agenda as the central custodian of global environmental compacts, and it is this background which led us to warmly welcome the invitation from some of your Parties to work on the Lusaka Agreement. We offer this instrument as a potential tool in fulfilling a number of objectives of CITES in the African region.

The need to promote and provide incentive measures through various recognition and reward schemes for traditional knowledge and practices in the area of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use is gaining momentum worldwide. While CITES should not be seen to be getting in the way of communities, individuals and institutions that are promoting the practice of traditional medicine based on plant and animal specimens, you have the legal obligation to ensure that due controls and effective mechanisms for international trade are put in place to facilitate the practice of traditional sustainable use.

An emerging but complex issue is the role of NGOs in CITES. This question will not go away and it will need to be faced headlong before long. I might remind you that in the current debate on UN Reform, close attention is being paid to the role of Civil Society in Global Governance Structures and Mechanism. While governments negotiate and sign agreements, civil society in a variety of groups including the private sector implement and benefit from these agreements. Any instrument which expects to be viable and relevant in the 21st Century will need to take this reality into account by bringing civil society on board.

Finally Mr Chairman, I would like to return to the crucial issue of funding. The question must be posed: can CITES work without funds? Is it feasible to keep increasing the demands upon the CITES Secretariat, the Plants and Animals Committees, various working groups and above all Contracting Parties from developing countries and countries

with economies in transition, while the budget is kept at almost zero growth or in real terms shrinking? The Secretariat prepared for your consideration a very realistic and practical budget, including a strategic plan and organizational chart that would propel the Convention on the right path into the new century. Predictable, timely and sustainable funding is the key to effective biodiversity conservation in the context of CITES.

It will be recalled that, at the request of both donors and range States, the Elephant and Rhino Conservation Facility was established several years ago to help the relevant range States to prepare plans and implement programmes and institute incentive measures for the effective conservation of the elephant and rhinoceroses against poaching. To date, it has no money in its kitty. I would like to urge governments to contribute to this Fund liberally so that it may achieve its objectives of giving support to range States, as they grapple with conservation and sustainable-use programmes and the ever-present menace of poaching and illegal trafficking of elephant and rhinoceros specimens.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge all governments to meet their financial obligations fully and promptly, and to urge those that are able to do so, to contribute generously to the Convention account so that the relevant identified priorities can be implemented.

In conclusion, this 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES has presented us with an invaluable opportunity to explore the salient aspects of biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use, through a very systematic and comprehensive agenda. I have been impressed by the nature and civilized manner in which you have debated the items, taking into account the various perspectives, roles and responsibilities of relevant players and stakeholders at national, subregional and continental levels in a global context. In spite of the fact that balloting has been used to decide some delicate issues, in particular the whale and the elephant debates, for the sake of the continuity of life on earth, we should come from this meeting knowing that there are no winners or losers as we are in it together. If we were to single out winners and losers, we would have to seek them among the species, the ecosystems and the habitats affected by our actions.

It is my hope that, as a result of your deliberations and actions, effective mechanisms have been or will be, put in place expeditiously between now and the 11th meeting, to ensure that all countries and their respective sub-regions and regions acquire and/or develop capacities to implement or absorb the impact of the Resolutions adopted and Decisions taken at this meeting in respect of the conservation and sustainable use of all the endangered species, their habitats and ecosystems covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

In closing let me thank your Secretary General and the Secretariat staff for preparing yet another memorable meeting. I urge all Parties to continue to support the Secretariat as it endeavours to serve you efficiently, professionally, diligently and impartially. The health of the Secretariat accurately mirrors the health and achievement of your Convention.

I thank you very much.