



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
20-22 June 2012

Agenda item 8
General debate

**Letter dated 21 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of
Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of
the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

I enclose herewith a joint statement by the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio conventions — the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Maria Luiza **Ribeiro Viotti**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 21 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

[Rio de Janeiro, 21 June 2012]

Joint statement by the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio conventions — the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Towards synergistic action on the ground to achieve global goals on preserving biodiversity, combating desertification and/or land degradation and addressing climate change

1. We have come a long way since the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (Brundtland Report) warned us that if human needs are to be met, the Earth's natural resources must be conserved. Twenty years ago, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) addressed this warning, and now Governments are discussing "The future we want".
2. Today, on the twentieth anniversary of the Earth Summit and the conception of its conventions, we reaffirm commitments to work towards the achievements of the goals of the three Rio conventions, namely, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
3. Since 1992, awareness of the importance of addressing climate change, preserving biodiversity and combating desertification and/or land degradation has increased and actions in support of these objectives have accelerated and matured and have been mainstreamed into a number of sectors and agendas. The Rio conventions have played a key role in these positive developments, by facilitating an international framework for agreement on actions and mobilizing stakeholder participation, scientific information and financial resources for implementation. Our processes are geared towards providing solutions that consider the interlinkages that can help meet our common long-term objectives.
4. We endeavour to tackle sustainable development challenges through cross-cutting approaches, such as ecosystem-based approaches to adapting, generating and sharing information on the impacts of and vulnerability to climate change when considering biodiversity and land use, and to mainstream gender in our activities, where the joint pursuit further strengthens cooperation. Synergistic approaches are intimately related to food security, poverty alleviation, water availability and renewable energy, offering further opportunity to promote sustainable development.

5. Through a Joint Liaison Group, the conventions have been striving over the past decade to contribute to optimal outcomes in national policymaking. The Joint Liaison Group offers a forum that considers and promotes the linkages between country parties, international processes and action at the local level. These linkages are crucial given that the loss of biodiversity, soil loss as a result of land degradation and desertification and climate change are primarily felt at the local level, with negative impacts on livelihoods and ecosystems.

6. There is a need for a greater involvement of all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, in our respective processes, with a view to generating a bottom-up push and implementing actions on the ground. This involvement must be echoed by mainstreaming the goals and targets established through our various processes into all relevant economic sectors and social agendas.

7. With regard to sustainable development, the three Rio conventions, by addressing climate change, desertification and/or land degradation and the loss of biodiversity in a coordinated manner that delivers environmental and socioeconomic co-benefits, promote the effective use of limited resources. Although each convention has an independent mandate, benefits may be achieved by coordinating the implementation of the priorities set forth in their respective national policy tools, including national adaptation plans, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, nationally appropriate mitigation actions and national adaptation programmes of action, as well as the reporting processes.

8. We are certain that focusing on identifying and promoting such synergistic activities, especially at the country level and with the full involvement of other partners and sectors, is an important element that contributes to creating conditions conducive to sustainable development. It is also our conviction that the international community must increase the focus on land, climate and biodiversity as interlinked issues among the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development.

9. Looking back at the past 20 years, it is clear that now is the time for the international community to commit itself to a truly sustainable future. Coordinated, concrete, concerted, simple and attainable solutions are needed. Countries and Governments should set sustainable development goals that take into account existing interlinkages between the three pillars of sustainable development and recognize the important goals and targets already agreed upon within the Rio conventions. As such, sustainable development goals must include achievable targets on land, biodiversity and climate change. These are imperatively needed.

10. The establishment and full implementation of sustainable development goals and targets through the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in parallel and in conformity with the processes of each of the Rio conventions, will allow for value-added support, incentives and increased levels of sustainable investment.

11. It is up to us who are assembled here and now to enhance the implementation of the three Rio conventions, on behalf of the world today and of the generations to come, who will inherit the costs and benefits of today's decisions. Let us not fail them. Let us go land-degradation neutral. Let us stop the loss of biodiversity. Let us go carbon neutral.

(Signed) Luc **Gnacadja**
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the
United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification in Those
Countries Experiencing
Serious Drought and/or
Desertification,
Particularly in Africa

(Signed) Christiana **Figueres**
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the
United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change

(Signed) Braulio **Ferreira de Souza Dias**
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on
Biological Diversity
