



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE PEOPLES' WORLD CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE
CHANGE AND MOTHER EARTH**

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COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA**

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Life in harmony, into the future
いのちの共生を、未来へ
COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear that the international community has failed to deliver on its promise to reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010. The third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook, to be released next month, draws from the over 120 fourth national reports received so far from the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The report demonstrates that the 2010 Target has not been met. We continue indeed to lose biodiversity at an unprecedented rate.

This ongoing loss of our biological resources is undermining our future wellbeing and prosperity. 89 per cent of the reports received from the Parties have indicated climate change as one of the main drivers of the loss of biodiversity. At the Copenhagen Climate Conference last December, the CBD's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Climate Change and Biodiversity released a major new report which shows that the degradation of many ecosystems is significantly reducing their carbon storage and sequestration capacity, leading to increases in emissions of greenhouse gases.

Equally worrying, the AHTEG report shows that observed changes in climate have already adversely affected biodiversity at the species and ecosystem level, with further changes in biodiversity being inevitable with further changes in climate. Indeed the majority of fourth national reports received by the CBD indicate that climate change is either currently driving biodiversity loss or will drive it in the relatively near future.

The CBD also released a scientific synthesis of the impacts of ocean acidification on marine biodiversity at the Copenhagen Climate Conference. The synthesis shows that the absorption of atmospheric CO₂ has caused ocean acidity to increase by 30 per cent since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago. Moreover, by 2050 ocean acidity could increase by 150 per cent, 100 times faster than any change in acidity experienced in the marine environment over the last 20 million years, giving little time for evolutionary adaptation within biological systems. By 2100, 70 per cent of cold-water corals, key refuges and feeding grounds for commercial fish species, may be exposed to corrosive waters. Since ocean acidification is irreversible on timescales of at least tens of thousands of years, substantial damage to ocean ecosystems can only be avoided by urgent and rapid reductions in global CO₂ emissions.

Those who will suffer the most from the loss of biodiversity compounded by climate change are the most vulnerable nations and segments of the society. It is for this reason that as early as 2007 the CBD Secretariat drew the attention of the international community to the impacts of climate change on indigenous and local communities.

On the positive side, the AHTEG report also shows that ecosystem-based adaptation, which integrates the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services into an overall adaptation strategy, can be cost-effective, generate social, economic and cultural co-benefits, and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. For example, ecosystem-based adaptation can take advantage of the vast stores of biodiversity-related knowledge that indigenous and local communities have accumulated in their long history of managing the environment.

In the Andes, indigenous farmers are using their knowledge to work with the Government of Peru in order to reintroduce diverse potato crops as insurance against extreme climate change, and in order to interbreed highland and lowland llamas to produce hybrid animals more resistant to extreme climatic events. In Tanzania, the Maasai are putting their knowledge into practice by working to preserve their traditional cattle breeds, which are robust, adaptable, and drought resistant, and therefore superior to introduced cattle.

These types of synergistic solutions to the biodiversity and climate crises need to be front and centre during this 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, and particularly at two upcoming events. In September in New York, Heads of State attending the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly will for the first time ever discuss biodiversity, its role in development, and its role in the fight against climate change. And this October, the CBD's tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will take place in Nagoya, Japan, where an unprecedented range of stakeholders—from youth to indigenous authorities to the private sector—will gather to shape our post-2010 strategic plan and post-2010 biodiversity targets.

Let me therefore ask you to promote biodiversity-based solutions to the climate crisis whenever you can. At the institutional level, the Rio Conventions are striving to do their part. The CBD is expected to adopt a joint work programme with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Nagoya. Since the objectives of the Rio Conventions are mutually supportive, the joint work programme will ultimately allow our conventions to be implemented in a coordinated manner at national, regional and global levels. It will also be a major contribution to the World Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio in 2012, 20 years after the Rio Conventions were first opened for signature.

Let me congratulate Bolivia for the historical initiative of declaring 20 April, Mother Earth Day. In 2008, Evo Morales wrote: "Sisters and brothers, today our Mother Earth is ill." The same can be said today – for Pachamama, our Mother Earth, has not yet been healed. As we strive to do so, I ask you to keep in mind the slogan of the International Year:

"Biodiversity is Life... Biodiversity is OUR Life."

Thank you for your kind attention.
