



STATEMENT

by

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

LIVEABLE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES FOR THE FUTURE

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE SECOND WORLD CITIES SUMMIT 2010

*Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre, 30 June
2010*

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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,

Last month, the Convention Secretariat released the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook. The news is not good. Based on 120 national reports submitted by Parties, the report demonstrates that the international community, individually and collectively, has failed to fulfil its commitment to reduce substantially the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. The report confirms that we continue to lose biodiversity at unprecedented rates: today, species extinction rates may be 1,000 times higher than the natural rate. Land use compounded by climate change is one of the most important driving forces behind this unprecedented loss of species. Early this month, the French Government issued its four-yearly environment report, which confirms the finding of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. It demonstrates that biodiversity continues to be lost, and the main cause is the expansion of urban areas, which in France are increasing by 60,000 hectares a year. In Switzerland, one square metre of soil is being lost every second for urbanization and infrastructure. The Global Biodiversity Outlook warns that there could be massive further biodiversity loss before the end of this century, and several ecosystem tipping points are being approached, beyond which irreversible degradation will take place.

In launching the report, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for a new biodiversity vision for a healthy and sustainable future for mankind. This new vision should integrate the distinct contribution of cities in protecting life on Earth.

For the first time in history, the world's urban population now exceeds that of rural areas. A new era has been born—the era of "*Homo urbanus*", the city dweller. This development is expected to have far-reaching implications for humanity and for biodiversity.

The growing urban world represents one of the most dramatic changes experienced by humanity in recent history. In 1820, London became the first modern city with a population of more than one million. Sixteen other cities had joined the list by 1900. Today, the list includes 411 cities. As we were reminded by Minister Mah yesterday, every day the urban population is increasing by 200,000 people. Every week a city of more than 1 million people will need to be created to absorb the growing urbanisation of our planet. In Africa, urban population will grow from 350 million to 1,2 billion in 2050. China urban population has more than doubled during the last two decade surging from 19 to 47% and is expected to reach 59% by 2025. India urban population has increased six fold since the independence in 1947.

In 1950, only two cities—New York and Tokyo—had a population of more than 10 million. Today, there are more than 20 megacities on the planet, and, with the exception of New York and Tokyo, they are all located in developing countries. By 2030, four out of five urban residents in the world will live in developing countries and most of them in slums. Already about 1 billion urban dwellers live in slums. As stated by Dr. Jacques Diouf, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 150 growing cities will soon reach the size of New York.

The twenty-first century is indeed the century of the cities. However, if not managed adequately, the growth of the urban population may accelerate the unprecedented loss of biodiversity on our planet. Cities occupy 2 per cent of the planet's surface, but their residents use 75 per cent of the Earth's natural resources. Large populations living in megacities consume massive amounts of energy, thus contributing to climate change, which has been identified as one of the main drivers of the unprecedented loss of biodiversity. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), up to 30 per cent of all known species may disappear before

the end of this century as a result of climate change.

The pressures exerted on the planet's natural functions by human activity have reached such a level that the ability of ecosystems to meet the needs of future generations is now seriously, and perhaps irretrievably, compromised.

However, the loss of biodiversity is not a foregone conclusion, and unsound urban management is not the unavoidable destiny of cities. Environmentally sound urbanization and environmentally well-managed cities can exist. Singapore, the Garden City, is indeed a living testimony of this reality.

In March 2007, the representatives of 35 mayors adopted the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity. In May 2008, 50 mayors from 30 countries representing 100 million urban dwellers met under the theme "Local action for biodiversity". The Curitiba Declaration and the "Bonn Call for Action" were submitted to the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held with the participation of Heads of State and Government and more than 100 ministers of the environment.

The 6,000 participants attending the Bonn Biodiversity Summit endorsed the cities and biodiversity initiative and, for the first time, an environmental multilateral environmental agreement recognized the importance of local authorities. They called for a partnership between local authorities and Parties, setting a precedent for future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and other related intergovernmental processes.

At the same time, 400 scientists, planners and other practitioners adopted the Erfurt Declaration "Urbio 2008" at the first ever international conference on Networking, Urban Ecology, Urban Biodiversity and design for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Towns and Cities. As a result, the 6,000 participants at the Bonn meeting representing 191 Parties adopted for the first time a decision on cities and biodiversity—decision IX/28. The second Urbio meeting was held last month in Nagoya.

The Bonn decision encourages Parties to recognize the role of cities in national strategies and action plans, and invites Parties to support and assist cities in implementing the Convention at the local level. Indeed, one of the greatest achievements of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was the recognition that the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity requires the full engagement of cities and local authorities. To this end, a plan of action on cities, local authorities and biodiversity will be submitted to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, in October 2010 on the occasion of the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity.

The four-year process involving local authorities in support of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity will culminate in the City Biodiversity Summit 2010 in Nagoya City. This Summit, to be held from 24 to 26 October 2010, will bring together more than 300 mayors from around the world. The City Biodiversity Summit is expected to endorse the plan of action on cities, local authorities and biodiversity, and exchange lessons learned. The Summit will have before it the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity (CBI).

Addressing the 120 ministers attending the Bonn Biodiversity Summit in May 2008, Minister Mah Bow Tan, Minister of National Development for Singapore, proposed the CBD-led development of a city biodiversity index to measure progress, through self-evaluation, on

biodiversity at the local level of governance. To follow up on this, the Secretariat and the National Parks Board of Singapore jointly organized two technical expert workshops in Singapore, to develop the City Biodiversity Index, based on lessons learned in the application of other indexes such as the Living Planet and the Human Development Index. From 10 to 12 February 2009, the Convention Secretariat and Singapore hosted the first workshop, with 35 experts, which resulted in 16 cities around the world agreeing to test its application. The results from this testing phase will now be examined, over the next three days, by a group of experts, again in this Garden City.

The Index is based on three sub-components: measuring the actual biodiversity in urban spaces, measuring the ecosystem services provided by biodiversity in an urban context, and measuring its governance by local authorities. The network of testing cities, now expanded to around 25, and supported by selected Parties, will submit the index—renamed the Singapore Index after the second Curitiba Declaration in January 2010—to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, as part of the plan of action on cities, local authorities and biodiversity, as well as within the indicator framework for post-2010 targets.

The plan of action on cities, local authorities and biodiversity will mirror the new Strategic Plan of the Convention for the period 2011-2020 which will contain a biodiversity vision for 2050 and biodiversity target for 2020 as well as means of implementation and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The city and biodiversity initiative has been integrated as a major component of the post-2010 biodiversity vision. This vision will benefit from the leadership of the world's Heads of State and Government. Indeed on 22 September 2010 in New York a high-level event on biodiversity will be held on the occasion of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The vision of the leaders of the world will be submitted to the high-level segment of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which will be held with the participation of city mayors as full partners of government officials.

While biodiversity loss is a global concern, it is through local actions in particular that the situation can be addressed. As the Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, “faced with what is right, to leave it undone shows a lack of courage”. In line with this, I would like to congratulate the government of Singapore for establishing its Centre for Livable Cities, which brings together Singapore's expertise on sustainable urban development from across government, industry and academia and hosts an integrated body of knowledge on the livability of cities, encompassing areas such as urban planning, environmental management, sustainable transport solutions, and effective resource management.

I look forward to continuing to work with you in the lead-up to tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the Nagoya City Biodiversity Summit. To quote the Prime Minister of Singapore, “The stakes are high and we have to get it right early.” “Biodiversity is life, biodiversity is OUR life”, as the slogan of the International Year reminds us, a message we must do our best to spread.

Thank you for your kind attention.