



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



STATEMENT

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**THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE LAUNCH OF THE 2011 RIO CONVENTIONS CALENDAR

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Life in harmony, into the future
いのちの共生を、未来へ
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

In just over a week the official closing ceremonies of the International Year of Biodiversity will be held in Kanazawa, Japan. The year has been a tremendous success as recognized by its awarding of the Green Award for the best global environmental campaign last week in London. Most importantly, the year contributed to the historic success of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit.

In Nagoya, a new biodiversity strategy for 2011-2020 with ambitious targets was adopted as the overarching biodiversity framework of the whole biodiversity family. The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing was also adopted, as well as the Kuala Lumpur-Nagoya Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress. In addition, a pavilion on ecosystem-based management to climate change was organized by the three secretariats of the Rio Conventions and 19 partners. As a result, the Nagoya summit adopted a comprehensive decision on biodiversity and climate change emphasizing more clearly than ever the need for joint activities at the national level between the three Rio Conventions. We are now hoping to keep this momentum going into 2011, the International Year of Forests, and through to the Rio+20 Earth Summit, during which both of our Conventions will celebrate their 20th anniversary.

The forests of the world are vast. Thirty percent of the world's land area is forest cover. Moreover, forests include not only the expansive tropical forests in Brazil, the heart of Borneo and the Congo, but also the massive boreal ecosystems of Canada and Russia, as well as numerous dry forests and mangrove forests around the world.

These forests support communities around the globe. They are home to 300 million people, but over five times this number – 1.6 billion people – rely on forests for their livelihoods. Raw timber products around the globe are worth around 250 billion dollars. The added economic value amounts to double that much.

Perhaps most importantly, forests are the source of food and medicinal ingredients that are the difference between poverty and well-being for three quarters of the populations of some developing countries. They provide essential environmental functions such as conserving soils, ensuring adequate water supply, and regulating the climate. They provide habitats to about two-thirds of all animal and plant species on earth. And in particularly arid parts of the world, forests are crucial sources of sustenance during dry periods.

However, humans are putting so much pressure on the forests of our planet that their ability to nurture and sustain us is in serious jeopardy. The destruction of forests accounts for up to 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. And the deforestation of closed tropical rainforests could account for the loss of as many as 100 species a day.

As E.O. Wilson has said, "When you cut a forest, an ancient forest in particular, you are not just removing a lot of big trees and a few birds fluttering around in the canopy. You are drastically imperilling a vast array of species within a few square miles of you."

Because of richness and importance of forest ecosystems, and since 2011 is the International Year of Forests, the Rio Conventions have chosen the theme of forests for their annual calendar. As you know, this year's calendar presents images that show the key role of forests in sustainable development. We at the CBD are proud to have played a part in producing the calendar, for now more than ever people around the world need to be made aware of the role that forest biodiversity plays in sustaining human livelihoods.

The United Nations General Assembly has decided to declare 2011-2020 the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. This decision offers a unique opportunity to continue raising public awareness on the interlinkages between climate change, biodiversity, soil and forests. In our common journey toward Rio +20 and beyond you can always count on the secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity as indeed biodiversity is life... biodiversity is our life.

Thank you for your kind attention.