



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE CARRIBEAN REGIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

**ST GEORGES, GRENADA
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Life in harmony, into the future
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COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sadly, far too many people across the world remain apathetic to the ongoing loss of life on Earth. This is because the majority of the public and policymakers remain ignorant about the irreplaceable contributions that biodiversity makes to human wellbeing. As a result, biodiversity loss has not yet fully penetrated our collective consciousness.

Following the historic success of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit last October, the UN General Assembly therefore declared 2011-2020 the UN Decade on Biodiversity. The Decade is not only a vehicle to support the implementation of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. At the brink of ecological disaster, it is a worldwide celebration of everything we stand to lose by doing nothing and everything we stand to gain by changing our ways.

Over the course of the Decade, biodiversity must be mainstreamed throughout government and all sectors of society through communication, education and awareness-raising, appropriate incentive measures, and institutional change. By 2020, citizens and governments without exception should be firmly committed to the preservation of our biological heritage.

With this in mind, I would like to thank the Ministry of Environment of Grenada for organizing and hosting this event. Grenada is a fitting venue, given the country's great diversity of habitat types – rainforests, cloud forests, evergreen forests and deciduous forests commingling with cactus scrubs, mangroves and littoral woodlands. Indeed it is this type of landscape diversity that makes the Caribbean as a whole on the world's biodiversity hotspots, with 50% of its plants, 46% of its mammals, 27% of its birds, 40% of its freshwater fish, 93% of its reptiles and all of its amphibians being found nowhere else in the world.

This NBSAP capacity-building workshop should be seen as a crucial first step toward securing the long-term viability of the biological resources of this truly unique region. Many countries in the Caribbean have already gained substantial experience in developing and implementing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. We now need to draw on this communal expertise, for time is of the essence.

To provide effective guidance on national implementation, new NBSAPs must be formulated as soon as possible. Any delay in accomplishing this task will augur poorly for the achievement of the Aichi Targets. In addition to revising NBSAPs, the signing and ratification of the Nagoya Protocol is an urgent topic. To ensure that the first meeting of the governing body of the Protocol will take place in India in October 2012 back-to-back with COP-11, 50 ratifications are required before 19 July 2012. Moreover, to reach consensus on funding targets at COP-11, progress must be made on such foundational issues as what constitutes biodiversity-related funding and the levels needed, particularly in relation to the Aichi Targets and the implementation of NBSAPs.

The task the international community set itself in Nagoya was ambitious. It will require leadership and creative thinking from the Parties, national focal points, the GEF and the Secretariat to ensure the timely delivery of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan at national and regional levels. But I have not doubt that the countries of the Caribbean can live up to the challenge of Nagoya. I urge you to remember what is at stake in this process: nothing less than the future of life on Earth.

Thank you for your kind attention.