



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

Statement by
Prof. Kazuhiko Takeuchi,
Special Representative of the Rector, the United Nations University

During the High Level Segment of the UN Biodiversity Conference
Cancun, Mexico, 2-3 December 2016

Excellencies and distinguished participants,

On behalf of the United Nations University (UNU), a global think tank acting as the academic arm of the United Nations, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of its Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

UNU's work is based on the understanding that biodiversity issues cannot be solved only by looking at biodiversity. It is necessary that they be considered in connection with related socio-economic activities and people's livelihoods.

The Satoyama Initiative, developed in a joint effort by UNU and the Ministry of the Environment of Japan as a global effort to realize "societies in harmony with nature", promotes sustainable use by mainstreaming biodiversity in production sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The goal of this mainstreaming is to create healthy "socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes" (SEPLS), where rich biodiversity and fulfilling livelihoods provide mutual benefits for each other in a dynamic mosaic of land and sea uses. The Satoyama Initiative has been recognized in CBD COP decisions since 2010 as a useful tool for promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity. UNU is involved in the collection and analysis of case studies, development and implementation of Indicators of Resilience in SEPLS, and other research activities contributing to the global knowledge base.

The United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) hosts the Secretariat of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI), a global partnership of over 200 governmental, non-governmental, academic, private sector, indigenous peoples and local community (IPLC) and other organizations. The partnership has realized many achievements in creating win-win relationships between sectoral production activities and biodiversity conservation, through policy contribution, knowledge management and resource mobilization, such as by leveraging financing in a new GEF-funded project for "Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management into Priority Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes".

UNU also recognizes the importance of considering biodiversity's inextricable linkages with cultural diversity. It should be highlighted that agro-biodiversity plays a central role in strengthening these linkages, and that resulting biocultural diversity can contribute to the tourism sector by attracting many people. This was confirmed in the discussions at the First Asian Conference on Biocultural Diversity, which was held from 27 to 29 October 2016 in Nanao City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan, organized by UNU along with the CBD Secretariat, UNESCO, and the Ishikawa Prefectural and Nanao City governments.

The major output of this conference is the "2016 Ishikawa Declaration on Biocultural Diversity", which was adopted by the more than 500 participants from 38 countries and affirms the contributions of biocultural diversity toward resilient and sustainable societies as well as the achievement of sustainable development including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It includes a commitment to further implementing integrated approaches to conservation, sustainable use and the equitable

sharing of benefits, strengthening the resilience of local biocultural diversity, and promoting appropriate development through the local implementation of international designation systems such as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks and World Heritage. Coordination among these designation systems is important as it will enable linking local biological and cultural resources and creating new values and norms toward sustainable society. UNU will continue to contribute to platforms for better coordination and mutual learning, such as IPSI and the UNESCO-SCBD Joint Programme on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity.

UNU contributes to the scientific knowledge base on biodiversity mainstreaming with a number of research projects on ecosystem services and direct contributions to assessments and capacity building under the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). IPBES is becoming an excellent source for the best and most up-to-date scientific information about biodiversity from a large number of perspectives, many of which are important for mainstreaming. The platform recently released its Thematic Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production, which it finds are relevant issues in the agricultural sector. UNU encourages the Parties to support and make use of the significant scientific knowledge produced by IPBES.

UNU's Enhancing Resilience to Climate and Ecosystem Changes in Semi-Arid Africa (CECAR-Africa) project has been involved in the development of a "Ghana Model", combining climate change and ecosystem change research as an integrated resilience-enhancement strategy for sub-Saharan Africa. A new research project, Predicting and Assessing Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services (PANCES), is now underway to quantify and integrate natural and socio-economic values, and to simulate their future changes under different scenarios, building on an integrated model of socio-ecological systems in Japan, for the purpose of policy contribution.

The UNU-IAS Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project contributes to the Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets with transformative education to address biodiversity loss, particularly through the Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) Network of 149 members, and the ProSPER.Network of 37 member universities, most of whom focus on biodiversity.

The Biodiversity and Community Health (BaCH) Initiative co-anchored by UNU-IAS and the United Nations University International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH) has been working with the CBD Secretariat to develop technical outputs and conduct capacity building toward mainstreaming biodiversity and health. UNU has also been cooperating with FAO on the GIAHS programme, developing monitoring and evaluation methods for biodiversity conservation activities related to agriculture.

UNU's core research related to sustainability has repeatedly shown that, as the draft Cancun Declaration declares, it is essential for humans to live in harmony with nature. The Ishikawa Declaration on Biocultural Diversity, the Satoyama Initiative, and the other projects mentioned here reflect this vision. UNU therefore welcomes the draft Cancun Declaration, which reflects strong political commitment by Parties and other organizations, and looks forward to its adoption and consideration at the upcoming United Nations Biodiversity Conference. UNU is committed to further enhance our contribution in partnership with the international community toward living in harmony with nature.

Thank you very much for your attention.