

Opening statement by
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Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
at the
Asia Pacific Regional Consultation on the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework

Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

Thank you for the kind introduction.

H.E. Mr. Kiuchi, State Minister of Environment of Japan, Mr. Morita, Director General, Department of Environment, Aichi Prefecture, Dear Delegates, our recent Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Sharm el Sheik, Egypt last December formally unleashed the preparatory process for the crafting of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. We are here today to begin the first of a broad series of regional and thematic consultations, in which Parties, civil society organizations, women's groups, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, youth, business and private sector associations, academia - all stakeholders, will deliberate on the successes and challenges of our collective efforts to safeguard nature in the framework of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, and to provide their inputs for an ambitious but solid way forward. We are also pleased that the Co-Chairs appointed by the COP, Basile van Havre and Francis Ogwal are also with us today.

I could think of no more appropriate a place to kick off this process than here in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, in fact in this very same congress center, where our current Strategic Plan and the twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets were adopted eight years ago during COP 10. On that occasion, the Protocol, bearing the name of this city and incarnating the third objective of the Convention – the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing- was also adopted. The leadership and guidance of Japan as COP President at that time lead us also to adopt the very noble and ambitious long term vision towards 2050 "Living in harmony with nature", a vision that I take very seriously, and hope wholeheartedly that we will attain, even before 2050!

Aichi Prefecture has been actively involved with the Convention since hosting COP 10, and its Prefectural government has been working consistently to implement the Convention's decisions, goals and targets at subnational level since then, also as a global leader in supporting the Biodiversity Targets that carry its name. Aichi Prefecture's leadership today relies critically on the personal engagement of Governor Hideaki Ohmura, who jumpstarted the Group of Leading Subnational Governments for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, or GoLS, bringing together 8 subnational governments in an ambitious commitment to the Sharm to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People. I thank Governor Ohmura for his active and visionary role in Sharm el-Sheikh, as a key player at the 6th Summit of Cities in Egypt, and in the Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments to the Convention.

It is thus very fitting, and not surprising, that we are honoured to be hosted here for the first regional consultative workshop for the post-2020 framework. I thank and congratulate Japan, the Ministry of the Environment and the Aichi Prefecture for taking the initiative to host and lead once again. I also wish to thank and recognize the Japan Biodiversity Fund for financial and logistical support for this event.

What do we need by way of a global framework to enable and ensure that we can each, in our countries, societies, economies, communities, organizations and businesses take the necessary actions to safeguard nature for humanity?

This is our question, and it is a pressing one.

Despite numerous efforts on countless fronts in practically all the corners of the world, we are losing too many ecosystems, too many species, too many genes and their combinations far too quickly. It is very preoccupying to know that biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse is, again this year, among the top ten risks in the Global Risks Report published by the World Economic Forum.

I see a very packed room before me and can only think that this is a sign of the enthusiasm and anticipation that we all share for the design of a new global biodiversity framework. Ladies and gentlemen, what we discuss, decide, and deliver by this process will set the stage for our efforts in the coming decades; and these efforts, in turn, will determine our success, or our failure, in ensuring life, as we know it, on this beautiful Planet Earth. I urge you to take this opportunity, and this responsibility, to think creatively, ambitiously, and practically so as we may pave the way to a brighter future.

Thank you.