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**Convention on Biological Diversity**



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**BIODIVERSITY  
AND AGRICULTURE**

**STATEMENT**

by

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

at the

**G8 DIALOGUE SERIES**

convened by the

**INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS UNIVERSITY (UNU-IAS)**

**“CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY OR THE  
UNPRECEDENTED PLANETARY ENVIRONMENTAL  
CHALLENGE FACING MANKIND”**

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ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE  
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Governor Akiko Domoto,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last Saturday, a powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 on the Richter scale jolted extensive areas of north-eastern Japan. Let me convey to the people and the Government of Japan my deepest condolences for the lost of human life and for the sorrow and pain caused by this natural disaster. We, human beings have always lived and accepted with humility the pain and sorrow generated by natural disasters as part of our collective destiny. However man-made natural disasters are not part of human destiny and are therefore very difficult to accept.

Last year more than 950 natural disasters have been recorded. During the last four years more than one billion people have been affected by wheatear related events. Out of 13 flash emergency appeals issued by the United Nations last year, 12 were related to climate change. As the last report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made clear, climate change is man-made phenomenon. Today's level of atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide has not been seen for 650,000 years.

Eleven out of the twelve past years have been the hottest years since meteorological data were first recorded in 1850. A study by United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has shown that, during the last 30 years, world temperatures have been the highest in 12,000 years. The summer of 2003 was the hottest in Europe in the last 500 years.

Sixty per cent of ecosystem services are being degraded as a result of human activity. Pressure from human activities on the natural functioning of the planet has reached such an extreme that the ability of ecosystems to meet the needs of future generations is now seriously—perhaps irreversibly—jeopardized.

The unprecedented lost of biodiversity is also caused by human beings. Indeed, the unprecedented loss of biodiversity, compounded by climate change in an increasingly urbanized world, is the most important planetary challenge facing mankind.

Never since human beings first appeared on Earth has anthropogenic change to our planet's natural functioning been so destructive as it has been over the last half-century, resulting in an unparalleled loss of biodiversity on Earth. The current rates of biodiversity loss are estimated to be up to 100 times the natural rate. This unprecedented biodiversity loss is being compounded by the negative impact of climate change. Up to 30% of all known species may disappear before the end of this century owing to climate change. More than 80% of biodiversity is found in tropical forests. However, every minute, 20 hectares of forests are disappearing. Globally, at least 4.4 million trees are cut down every day and 1.6 billion trees lost every year.

Biodiversity is a victim of climate change. But it is also of part of any effective response to the challenge. Conserving forests can reduce net human emissions of greenhouse gases by up to 20 per cent. Wetlands contain more carbon than all of the world's forests combined. According to IPCC, by the end of this century, two thirds of the Earth's remaining species are likely to be extinct. Indeed, climate change is one of the main drivers of the unprecedented loss of biodiversity.

The link between biodiversity and climate change operates in two directions. Biodiversity loss is both a consequence of, and a contributing factor to, climate change. Seriously affected by climate change, biodiversity loss aggravates the challenges of climate change. Healthy oceans and healthy forests contribute to addressing the climate-change challenges. While climate change is indeed an energy and a security issue, it is also an

environmental issue. Biodiversity loss is an environmental issue but it is also an economic, financial, cultural, ethical as well as a security issue.

It is for this reason that the international community celebrated last year's International Day for Biological Diversity under the theme "Climate change and biodiversity". As usual, the United Nations University marked this event. In his message to the international community, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, stressed that "the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an essential element of any strategy to adapt to climate change".

Let me therefore pay tribute to the Institute of Advanced Studies of the United Nations University for convening this timely G8 Dialogue Series on climate change and biodiversity and convey to Professor Zakri and his team my gratitude for the honour of being invited to address this august gathering

Last year, for the first time since Rambouillet Summit held in 1972, the G8 Summit in adopting the Heiligendamm Declaration has elevated biodiversity at the level of concerns of most powerful leaders in the world. Biodiversity was included as a distinct and identifiable issue of the Summit. The Heiligendamm Summit took note also of the Potsdam 2010 Initiative among the ministers of the environment of the G8 and their counterparts from China, Brazil, India, Mexico and South Africa. The G8+5 forum was created.

Building on the Heiligendamm achievements, Japan took the initiative of including biodiversity as a priority of the next summit of the G8 to be held in July in Hokkaido at the same level as climate change and the Kobe 3R Action Plan. Last month, here in Japan, the G8 ministers of the environment adopted the Kobe Call for Action on Biodiversity, which reaffirms the support to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and encourage implementation of the ten activities included in the "Potsdam Initiative" in the five following areas : achievement of the 2010 biodiversity target and actions for setting a post-2010 biodiversity target; sustainable use of biodiversity; biodiversity and protected areas; private-sector engagement and strengthening of scientific capabilities for monitoring biodiversity. The Hokkaido Summit will have before it for the first time a plan of action for the implementation of the Convention on life on Earth

This unique contribution of Japan is in line with the spirit and letter of its just finalized third Strategy on Biodiversity which calls for a "Grand Design" based on adaptive management, the precautionary approach and the full engagement of society. All three are elements of the ecosystem approach adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Indeed we need such a "Grand Design" also at the global level. This will require a Global Alliance for protecting life on earth. It will require a renewed international cooperation. The 2010 Potsdam Initiative is a major step in the right direction. The G8+5+3 is also another significant step in the right direction. This "Grand Design" for protecting life on Earth cannot be achieved with the full engagement of all stakeholders including business, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, parliamentarians, local authorities and the youth.

As stated recently by Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, "It is important for each country to address sincerely what they are able to do and what they should do toward the achievement of the biodiversity 2010 target and additional targets, by collaborating with other countries, international organizations, NGOs and so forth. Japan is determined, in Asia and in the international community, to actively contribute to such activities and make further efforts toward the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as a potential host of COP-10."

Two weeks ago in Bonn, 5,000 participants in the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity endorsed the offer of Japan, Aichi Prefecture and the city of Nagoya to host their tenth meeting in October 2010. The Nagoya Biodiversity Summit will coincide with the target adopted by world leaders in Johannesburg to reduce substantially the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. It will also coincide with the Gutenberg Commitment of the 27 European leaders to stop the loss of biodiversity in Europe by 2010. It will also coincide with the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity. It will coincide with the first-ever summit of the United Nations General Assembly on biodiversity as well as with the adoption of an international regime on access and benefit sharing as well as the adoption of a new protocol on liability and redress under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

For an exceptional meeting, the biodiversity family has found an exceptional host, the people and the Government of Japan. The decision to offer to host the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, adopted by the Japanese Cabinet on 16 January 2007, was exceptional. The kick-off symposium for the success of the meeting held two days ago in Nagoya and attended by 1,100 participants was exceptional. The Asahi Biodiversity Forum attended by more than 300 participants was also exceptional.

The “Nagoya vision” for a global “Grand Design” calls for a strength of purpose with a sense of leadership. By offering to host the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit, the people and the government of Japan have demonstrated to play a leadership role on biodiversity as they have done it in 1997 by offering to the world the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. Nagoya will be remembered by generation to come as the birth place of a new relationship of man living in harmony and in peace with nature. As stated by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, “The time for diagnosis is over and the time for action is now”, and the venue will be the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit.

I thank you for your kind attention.