



Convention on  
Biological Diversity



## STATEMENT

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

IGES INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE ASIA  
AND THE PACIFIC (ISAP)

PANEL DISCUSSION ON  
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND BIODIVERSITY: CHALLENGES AND  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank Professor Takeuchi for his keynote address and my fellow panellists for participating in this discussion. I am glad to be in Japan once again during the build up toward the International Year of Biodiversity, and the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Nagoya next October. Today's topic of ecosystems services is extremely important, with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment having revealed that 15 out of 24 ecosystem services are in decline worldwide.

Of course, the Japanese have long appreciated the importance of ecosystems services, as reflected in the ancient practice of *satoyama*. Local agricultural communities and villages have been at the heart of Japan's land management techniques throughout much of its history, carefully preserving the forests that provided them with both wood and compostable material. Over time, *satoyama* has been applied to larger areas of forests, grasslands, streams and ponds, dry rice fields and rice paddies, and so has become a much praised model for the sustainable use of our biological resources. As such, *satoyama* would be an excellent point of departure for communal efforts to preserve ecosystem services in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the global level, the Convention on Biological Diversity similarly recognizes that biodiversity provides humanity with a range of irreplaceable services, from crop pollination to climate regulation to soil and water purification. Indeed, at their second meeting, held in Jakarta in 1995, the Parties to the Convention recognized the ecosystem approach as the primary framework for action under the Convention. The principles of the approach were presented by the Convention's subsidiary scientific and technical body to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Nairobi in 2000. Since then, we have used these principles in the elaboration and implementation of our various thematic and cross-cutting work programmes.

Last year the Parties to the Convention noted the progress it has made to date on this issue, while highlighting the need to strengthen and promote the use of the ecosystem approach more widely. At the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Bonn in May 2008, the Parties agreed to increase their capacity-building activities, since a lack of resources and know-how is often an impediment to adopting an ecosystem-level perspective in conservation efforts, especially in developing countries. Further, the Parties agreed to incorporate the ecosystem approach into poverty-reduction strategies at the local level, where communities can be directly involved.

It is important to note that all of this has happened against the larger backdrop of an increased international commitment to achieving the Convention's objectives. As you all know, in 2002 at their meeting in The Hague, the Parties to the Convention set a target to slow rates of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010 as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. This target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations General Assembly, and was incorporated as a new target under the Millennium Development Goals. The enhanced phase of implementation of a biodiversity-preservation strategy was initiated at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Curitiba in 2006, and the enhanced phase of commitment at the ninth meeting, in Bonn in 2008. At the same time, G-8 Environmental Ministerial meetings presented the "Potsdam Initiative", "Kobe Call for Action for Biodiversity" and "Carta di Siricusa" on biodiversity, which gave biodiversity a new level of prominence at G-8 summits in Heiligendamm and Hokkaido/Toyako. This process will continue next year, when, just before

the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, heads of State and Government attending the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly will discuss the importance of biodiversity for the first time ever.

Going into the International Year of Biodiversity and the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, we need to build on the political momentum we have generated to date, but we must also focus on promoting innovative ways of protecting ecosystems services and biodiversity. An important part of this will be gathering as much sound science as well possible, as well as compiling relevant case-studies. With this in mind, we have created a web-based source book for the ecosystem approach, which we are in the process of expanding with case-studies, lessons learned and technical information submitted by the Parties. Moreover, the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook will provide a more general overview of the relevant science and experience base for assessing progress toward the 2010 target. It will also help us set a quantitative post-2010 target and establish a new Strategic Plan for the Convention. The more extensive and precise our data, the easier it will be to communicate why it is important to preserve biodiversity and to make clear how to go about doing it.

We must also make it more widely known that there are many different stakeholders in the fight to preserve biodiversity. Since biodiversity loss is interlinked with issues such as poverty, climate change, water scarcity, growth in demand, development and international conflict, organizations that are not typically concerned with biodiversity need to be made aware that it is in their interests to join our efforts. Promoting the ecosystem approach will be particularly valuable in this context, as it helps us view human beings as part of the larger natural systems that sustain our activities.

Finally, we need to facilitate and support national action in implementing biodiversity and ecosystem-preservation strategies. It is essential that countries critically evaluate how global targets, indicators, and preservation guidelines apply to their particular situation. Only when countries individually set targets and develop approaches at the national, provincial and municipal level will they ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem protection can effectively be incorporated into legislative decisions.

Let me close by mentioning that last November saw the convening in Malaysia of an Ad Hoc Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Meeting on an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Important first-steps toward establishing a platform were taken at that meeting. I hope that our discussion today will likewise help in the development of ecosystem-based preservation policies in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as further our preparations for the International Year and the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Thank you for your kind attention.