



STATEMENT

BY MR AHMED DJOGLAF

**THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE GLOBAL WORKSHOP ON THE SATOYAMA INITIATIVE

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Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada
Tel : +1 514 288 2220, Fax : +1 514 288 6588
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



Life in harmony, into the future
いのちの共生を、未来へ
COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and their partners are currently engaged in preparing a post-2010 biodiversity strategy aimed at re-establishing a harmonious relationship between man and nature in line with the letter and spirit of the slogan and logo of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. This strategic vision of how humans can live sustainably at the heart of the dynamic ecological systems that support us is in line and in harmony with the vision that the Japanese people have long had in their ancient land-the management practice of *satoyama*. Rural agricultural communities and villages in Japan have a centuries-old history of carefully managing the forests, grasslands, streams and ponds upon which their livelihood depends. In this time of environmental crisis, the international community has much to learn from such enlightened practices.

As you know, eight years ago the Parties to the Convention set a target to significantly slow biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010. And yet the upcoming third edition of Convention's Global Biodiversity Outlook to be issued on 10 May at major capital cities, including Paris and Tokyo, will show that we have fallen short in our efforts. Last September's Strömstad meeting of the European Union confirmed that the EU will not meet its 2010 biodiversity target. A similar conclusion was reached at the Kobe Biodiversity Dialogue in Japan as well as at the First ASEAN Biodiversity Conference in Singapore, both held last October. Overall, the more than 100 national reports received from Parties to the Convention to date have demonstrated that we continue to lose biodiversity at an unprecedented rate.

That is why the Convention and its partners are working to learn from our successes and failures to date in devising our post-2010 Strategic Plan and post-2010 biodiversity targets, which will be finalized at the tenth meeting of our Conference of the Parties in October in Nagoya. The central element of the new Strategic Plan will be emphasizing that humans are not outside agents attempting to preserve distant ecosystems, but are deeply dependent on biodiversity for everything that makes life as we know it possible: food, medicine, and the many other biological goods that sustain both our health and economic productivity; air purification, crop pollination, and the countless irreplaceable services provided by healthy ecosystems; and the spiritual and cultural fulfilment offered by contact with the natural world.

This perspective—the so-called ecosystem approach—received a great boost two years ago in Kobe, when G8 Environment Ministers issued a call to action and put forward *satoyama* as a model of how humans should live in and interact with nature. The Kobe Call to Action gave birth to the *Satoyama Initiative*, a Japanese-led project to promote *satoyama*-like practices internationally. The initiative gained impetus at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Bonn, Germany, in May 2008, and at international *satoyama* forums held in Japan in September 2008 and March 2009. This forum today is another step toward spreading the wisdom embodied by *satoyama* throughout the world.

The Director-General of the Japanese Ministry of the Environment once told me that the *satoyama* model can contribute highly towards achieving coexistence between human beings and nature. I agree with him strongly. It is therefore fitting that your meeting is hosted today by UNESCO, whose mandate is to promote peace by planting its seeds in the mind and soul of the people. It is also fitting that this meeting take place in Paris following the scientific meeting held last week on biodiversity science and policy as a contribution to the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity. Allow me therefore to thank the Japanese Ministry of the

Environment and the United Nations University, as well as UNESCO, the French Government and UNEP for making today's forum possible.

I look forward to progress reports on the *Satoyama* Initiative at the fourteenth meeting of the Convention's scientific body in Nairobi in May, as well as at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nagoya. Let me take this opportunity to urge you all to raise awareness about the potential of *satoyama* and *satoyama*-type practices whenever you can. A particularly important moment when the ecosystem approach must receive attention is during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly this September in New York, when a high-level meeting on biodiversity with the participation of Heads of State and Government will be convened for the first time ever. By keeping *satoyama* and the ecosystem approach at the heart of our deliberations over the course of the year, we will ultimately ensure that the theme of integrating humans into nature takes centre stage at the Nagoya meeting of the Conference of the Parties, when an unprecedented range of stakeholders—from youth to local authorities to the private sector—will gather to shape our post-2010 agenda.

The outcome of your meeting will make a major contribution to the preparation of the joint work programme between UNESCO and the Convention Secretariat on “cultural diversity and biological diversity” to be submitted for review and adoption by the Aichi-Nagoya biodiversity conference. Your proceedings will be therefore submitted as an official document to the high-level International Congress on Cultural and Biological Diversity to be held in Montreal from 9 to 11 June 2010.

“Follow nature and return to nature,” advised the celebrated Japanese poet Matsuo Basho. These words embody the spirit of *satoyama*, which through our combined efforts I am sure will become an increasingly influential practice in the years to come. I look forward to continued collaboration with you on the road to Nagoya and beyond as we fight to save life on Earth. As the slogan of the International Year of Biodiversity reminds us, “Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is OUR life.”

Thank you for your kind attention.