



STATEMENT

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE SIXTH TRONDHEIM CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY

Trondheim, Norway, 1 February 2010

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In her opening speech at the First Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity held in 1993, the then Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, began with these words: “The library of life is on fire. We must extinguish this fire before even more treasures, yet to be discovered, are lost beyond recovery”. The Library of life is still burning but a new vision is emerging.

At the last Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, held in 2007, Norwegian State Secretary Heidi Sørensen said: “Nature is the basis of our existence. A natural environment with a rich biological diversity adapts easier to changes such as a warmer climate. Biodiversity is a basis for sustainable development and human well-being. Biodiversity is our life insurance.”

We have heard today Mr. Erik Solheim, the Minister of the Environment and International Development of Norway, who reminded us of the cultural and spiritual dimension of biodiversity and the link between poverty, lost of biodiversity and climate change.

This vision has inspired and guided the Trondheim biodiversity gatherings since their inception 17 years ago in 1993, the year of the entry into force of the Convention. They have helped to shape the international agenda on biodiversity over nearly two decades. They have also greatly contributed to spreading the message, so clearly articulated by the Brundtland report *Our Common Future*, that human prosperity is dependent on a healthy biosphere,. As Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg stated, “The Brundtland Commission report changed everything. It opened a whole new era of thinking. It launched a movement...a milestone in the history of the United Nations.”

I am therefore delighted to be here in Norway at the opening of whole new era of thinking, the launch of a movement and what will be remembered as a milestone in the history of the United Nations.

I am indeed honoured to be here in Trondheim again, a city that might serve as a symbol for the virtues we will need over the coming months. Its name derives from the old Norse *Þróndheimr*, meaning “home of the strong and fertile ones”. And Trondheim lives up to its etymology: with its internationally renowned university and many research communities, the city is a centre of innovation in science, education and industry. This kind of broad-based creativity should inspire the representatives of the 85 countries attending our special meeting today.

This may be indeed the sixth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, but it is a special one. It is taking place at the start of the celebrations to mark the International Year of Biodiversity, a broad-based movement aimed at engaging the people of the world in the battle to protect life on Earth. The Year was launched officially last month in Berlin by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The launch was preceded by a Brazilian celebration in Curitiba and followed by events in Paris, London, Nagoya, Tokyo and last week in Madrid, with the participation of 48 European countries. Just one month into the year, two Heads of State or Government have already taken an active part in these events.

Building on the achievements of the G8 Summits of Heiligendamm, Hokkaido/Toyako and L’Aquila, biodiversity will be on the agenda of the 192 Heads of State and Government attending a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly exclusively devoted to biodiversity, which will be held in New York in September this year. This is indeed a milestone

in the history of the United Nations. This month's edition of the French magazine *Sciences et Avenir* placed the International Year of Biodiversity among the ten events that will mark 2010, together with the Shanghai Expo.

The meeting here this week is a special one because it is being held with the participation of the Secretary of State of Germany representing the President of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties as well as by Japan representing incoming President.

Our meeting is also special as it will contribute of designing together and shaping collectively the post-2010 biodiversity strategy. The third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, to be issued on 10 May in a number of the world's major cities, is expected to demonstrate, based on the 110 national reports received from Parties so far, that we have failed to fulfil the 2010 biodiversity target.

As the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen once said, "A thousand words will not leave so deep an impression as one deed". This why today's meeting is special. We are gathered here today to shape together the new Strategic Plan and the new biodiversity targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity for post-2010 period. The new Strategic Plan will include a 2050 biodiversity vision as well as 2020 targets and sub-targets, as well as mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The envisaged timeframe will coincide with the post-Kyoto regime, as biodiversity is indeed an integral part of responses to climate change.

The draft Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020 that is before you today has been prepared on the basis of more than 50 submissions received by Parties and partners, as well as views and comments of the representatives of all regions through a series of regional consultations, held in Tokyo, Cairo, Panama City and the Isle of Vilm, Germany. More than 16 workshops have been organized. It was submitted for the consideration of the business community at its meeting held in Jakarta in December last year, as well as to the public at large through the Aichi-Nagoya e-international biodiversity conference. The output from those meetings was then transmitted to an informal global consultation on the draft Strategic Plan held in London a few weeks ago, which was organized in partnership between United Kingdom and Brazil with the participation of more than 60 countries. It benefited from the contribution of issue-management group of the Environmental Management Group established in March last year under the leadership of UNEP. It was discussed at the joint meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice held in November last year.

The Strategic Plan to be adopted at Aichi Nagoya Biodiversity Summit will translate into reality the wisdom of Gro Brundtland who said, "You cannot tackle hunger, disease, and poverty unless you can also provide people with a healthy ecosystem in which their economies can grow." The adoption in Nagoya of a Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing will be another milestone in the history of the United Nations. Nagoya will be remembered for generations to come as the beginning of a new era of living in harmony into the future.

The Nagoya Conference will be held in less than one month before the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Mexico. We hope therefore that a joint work programme of action on climate change and biodiversity be submitted from Nagoya to Mexico and from Mexico to the

tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Combat Desertification, to be held in Seoul in 2011.

We all know that the journey from Curitiba to Bonn was not easy, and the one to Nagoya will be difficult. We also know that the journey from Nagoya to New Delhi via Rio+20 will not be easy. However in our common journey, we will need to be guided by Gro Harlem Brundtland's wisdom. Speaking to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development about the future of sustainable development, she said: "You may think we might fail, but I believe we will not, because failing is not an option." Indeed failing is not an option as biodiversity is life, biodiversity is our life.

Thank you for your kind attention.