



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

STATEMENT

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

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WORKSHOP ON JOURNALISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

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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,

Speaking to the international community at the UN Climate Conference here in Bali in 2007, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono stated: “The bottom line is that we must all do something differently, and do something more. We in Indonesia have...tried to do our part. We have become ever more aware, and humbled, by the fact that our tropical rainforests have a strategic, global function, that is, they produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxides not just for Indonesians but for the human race all over the planet.”

These are insightful words, for humility is indeed the natural stance to adopt when faced with the bounty of nature. This is particularly true here in Indonesia, which contains such an incredible wealth of species. With 17,000 islands, this nation has one of the world’s highest levels of species richness and endemism of animals, plants, hard corals and many groups of reef-associated fauna and flora. Conservation International considers Indonesia to be one of 17 “megadiverse” countries, with two of the world’s 25 “hotspots.” Indonesia also has 18 of the World Wildlife Fund’s (WWF) “Global 200” eco-regions, and 24 of Bird Life International’s 218 “Endemic Bird Areas”. Furthermore, Indonesia has 10% of the world’s flowering plant species and ranks as one of the world’s centers for agro-biodiversity of plant cultivars and domesticated livestock.

The great diversity of the flora and fauna in Indonesia’s is why this region’s biodiversity has tremendous value not only in the fight against climate change, but also in the fight against poverty. For example, researchers working with Conservation International’s Center for Applied Biodiversity Science found that in communities living near Ruteng Park on the island of Flores, there were fewer illnesses from malaria and dysentery, children missed less school because of better health, and there was less hunger from crop failure than in communities without intact forests nearby. Villages within the vicinity of intact forest cover also had improved water quality. Another study estimated that Lore Lindu National Park on Sulawesi provides water benefits worth US \$6.1 million annually for 304,607 local residents who irrigate 22,338 hectares of crops, with this figure increasing by a further \$2.9 when benefits to industry and other users are included. Still another study, looking at the value of conserving the Leuser Ecosystem on Sumatra over a 30-year period, found that conservation provided \$22.2 billion in overall value, compared to only \$16.9 billion provided by logging and farming.

Similar statistics coming from countries across the world are why in 2002 the Heads of State and Government attending the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development agreed to the 2010 Biodiversity Target, a commitment to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010 as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. But with 2010 now upon us it is all but certain that, as the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook will soon show, the target will not be met.

The Strömstad meeting of the European Union held in September last year confirmed that the European Union will not meet its 2010 biodiversity target. A similar conclusion was reached at the Kobe Biodiversity Dialogue in October last year, as well as at the first ASEAN Biodiversity Conference held the same month in Singapore. The more than 100 national reports received to date from Parties have demonstrated that we continue to lose biodiversity at an unprecedented rate.

One of the reasons for this failure is that the value of biodiversity remains widely unappreciated amongst both the general public and policymakers. That is why UN General Assembly declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, which has for its slogan “Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is OUR life.” The goals of this unique event in the life of the Convention on Biological Diversity are to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity, to communicate the human costs of its ongoing loss, and to get people, and in particular youth and children, involved in efforts to conserve and sustainably use our natural heritage.

2010 is also about forging a new way ahead. As economist and former environment minister Emil Salim has asked, “What has development in the globe achieved thus far, what has gone wrong with the

development model that we have pursued and in what direction do we have to go?" It is precisely such questions that are guiding the 193 Parties to the Convention in their ongoing preparations of the Conventions' 2011-2020 Strategic Plan, which will be finalized at our tenth Conference of the Parties this October in Nagoya, Japan. This new Strategic Plan is expected to include a 2050 biodiversity vision and 2020 targets and sub-targets.

The process for revising and updating the Strategic Plan was set out in decision IX/9 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In line with that decision, Parties, international organizations and representatives of civil society, including business, have submitted their views and recommendations on the updating and revision of the Strategic Plan. The Secretariat has indeed received more than 50 submissions. An issue management group of the Environmental Management Group on the post-2010 biodiversity targets was established in March last year under the leadership of UNEP.

An analysis and synthesis of views, drawing upon submissions from Parties and observers, as well as informal consultations, was prepared by the Secretariat and made available in June 2009, after which it was updated to reflect both further submissions received and views expressed in recent informal consultations. An initial draft of the Strategic Plan was submitted to a special joint meeting of the COP and SBSTTA bureaus held in Montreal last November. The revised draft containing the views and comments of the representatives of all the regions was submitted to 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 to 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 these meetings was also submitted to the sixth UN/Norway Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity. The revisions to the draft Strategic Plan that emerged from Trondheim are the basis for the consideration of the new Strategic Plan and related targets and indicators by the fourteenth meeting of SBSTTA and the third meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation, to be held in Nairobi in May.

Work thus far on the new Strategic Plan has attempted to improve on the previous plan in two key ways. The first way is by providing a mission and targets for 2020 that are both achievable and more measurable, and with a clear underlying logic consistent with the available scientific evidence, including a scientific review of biodiversity projections prepared for the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook. The second way is by providing a more effective framework for national implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. This framework is expected to include national targets, appropriate support mechanisms and a more robust approach to monitoring and review at both national and global levels, as well as an enhanced role for the Conference of the Parties in reviewing implementation and learning from past experience.

The post-2010 Strategic Plan is expected to include several other key components. These include drawing strong links between biodiversity, ecosystem services and human wellbeing; addressing the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services; making explicit the importance of biodiversity preservation for poverty eradication and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; addressing both the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, the latter including *inter alia* excessive consumption, for example of fossil fuels and meat, population growth, environmentally harmful subsidies, and a lack of public awareness about the harmful consequences of biodiversity loss; promoting concerted action by all by all sectors of government and society in addressing biodiversity loss; and linking such action with efforts to combat and adapt to climate change.

The last point bears some discussion, for as President Yudhoyono highlighted at the Bali Climate Conference, climate change and biodiversity are interlinked. Indeed, the report of the Convention's second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Climate Change and Biodiversity, launched at the

recent climate summit in Copenhagen, shows that climate change presents a near-unprecedented threat to the innumerable ecosystems that humans depend on for their health and wellbeing. Approximately 10 per cent of species assessed so far have an increasingly high risk of extinction for every 1°C rise in global mean surface temperature, a trend that is expected to hold true up to at least a 5°C increase.

At the same time, the AHTEG report showed that healthy ecosystems can provide natural buffers to the impacts of climate change. For example, the sustainable management of river basins, aquifers, flood plains and their associated vegetation can improve water storage and flood regulation. Restoration of coastal habitats such as mangroves can protect against storm surges, coastal erosion and flooding. The sustainable management of grasslands and rangelands can reduce soil erosion and desertification and enhance pastoral livelihoods. Indigenous knowledge can be used to maintain the genetic diversity of crops and livestock, conserving diverse agricultural landscapes and securing food provisioning under changing local climatic conditions.

Moreover, several practical reasons make ecosystem-based approaches to biodiversity conservation and management a particularly effective method of adapting to climate change. First, they can be applied at regional, national and local levels, and benefits can be realized over short and long time scales. Second, they may be more cost-effective and more accessible to rural or poor communities than measures based on hard infrastructure and engineering. And third, they can integrate and maintain traditional and local knowledge and cultural values.

At the official launch of the International Year in Berlin in early January, the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel stated: “The conservation of biological diversity has the same dimension as climate protection. We need a trend reversal - not at some point in the future, but immediately”.

I am glad to say that the International Year of Biodiversity is already unfolding in this spirit. The official launch in Germany was preceded by a Brazilian celebration in Curitiba and followed by events in Paris, London, Nagoya, Madrid, and New York. My hope is that following the 65th session of the UN General Assembly, which for the first time ever will convene a high-level segment on biodiversity with the participation of heads of state and government, and the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit this fall, we will have achieved an unprecedented level of international cooperation between all stakeholders in the struggle to save life on Earth.

President Yudhoyono asked the world in Bali three years ago, “If it is clear that the cost of inaction far outweighs the cost of action, what prevents us from investing the necessary resources today for our common future?” There is no better question to ask today when it comes to biodiversity.

Thank you for your kind attention.
