



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



STATEMENT BY
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL BIO-COMMUNAL
CONFERENCE ON BIODIVERSITY IN CYPRUS**

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LARNACA, CYPRUS



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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 2002 the Heads of State attending the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development agreed to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010 – the so-called 2010 Biodiversity Target. However the recently-released third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook, which draws from the over 100 national reports received so far from the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, demonstrates that the 2010 Target has not been met. We continue to lose biodiversity at an unprecedented rate.

It is no exaggeration to say that our quality of life will suffer tremendously if this trend continues. We depend on biodiversity for everything from food, fuel and medicines, to air and water purification and the pollination of wild plants and crops. But despite the great importance of biodiversity to human wellbeing, the far-reaching consequences of biodiversity loss are unknown to the general public and to policymakers.

That is why the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity. This historic event has three main goals: first, to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity; second, to communicate the human costs of its ongoing loss; and third, to get all sectors of society involved in efforts to conserve and sustainably use our natural heritage

I therefore commend the Intercollege-Larnaca and Friends of Nature Cyprus for organizing this first International Bi-communal Conference on Biodiversity in Cyprus. Bringing together academics, NGOs and members of industry, the conference amply exemplifies the spirit of engagement that underpins this year's celebrations. "The goal of life is living in agreement with nature," said the founder of Stoicism, the great philosopher Zeno, whose birthplace was the city in which you are gathered today. I hope these words will inspire you to find new solutions to the challenges we face, both during this conference and beyond.

Finding new ways to tackle biodiversity loss is ultimately what the International Year is about. The Year was officially launched in Berlin in early January under the chairmanship of Chancellor Angela Merkel. Many other important events are set to take place over the coming months, and two in particular stand out. In September the 65th session of UN General Assembly will for first time ever devote an entire day to the question of biodiversity, its role in development, its role in the fight against climate change, and our actions for the future. And in October the CBD's tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held in Nagoya, Japan.

In Nagoya our 193 Parties are expected to create a 2020 biodiversity target and a 2050 biodiversity vision as part of a post-2010 strategy for stopping biodiversity loss in the future. This will be done with the participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including youth, local and indigenous authorities, parliamentarians, cooperative agencies and the private sector. Ultimately, a grand global alliance of all sectors of society will be formed in Nagoya, making it a truly watershed moment in the struggle to preserve life on Earth.

I thank you for doing your part to save biodiversity during this historic year, and urge you to continue your good work throughout 2010 and beyond. I do not have to tell you that with the future wellbeing of our children at stake, business as usual is no longer an option. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us, "Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is our life."

Thank you for your kind attention.