



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



STATEMENT BY
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WILDLIFE AND
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION VIS-À-VIS
CLIMATE CHANGE

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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,

Mahatma Gandhi famously said: “The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problem.” It was in this spirit that in 2002 the world’s leaders agreed to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.

However, the recently-released third edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook* (GBO3) concludes that the 2010 target has not been met. Reviewing all available evidence, including the national reports of over 100 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, GBO3 shows that biodiversity continues to disappear at an unprecedented rate – up to 1,000 times the natural background rate of extinction.

We can no longer sit idly by: immediate action to save biodiversity is required if we are to maintain the quality of life that so many of us take for granted. GBO3 warns that irreversible degradation may take place if ecosystems are pushed beyond certain tipping points, leading to the widespread loss of ecosystem services that we depend on greatly, such as air and water purification, the renewal of soil fertility, climate stabilization and the pollination of wild plants and crops.

The relationship between biodiversity loss and climate change is particularly worrying. At the Copenhagen Climate Conference last December, the CBD’s Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Climate Change and Biodiversity released a major new report which shows that the degradation of many ecosystems is significantly reducing their carbon storage and sequestration capacity, leading to increases in emissions of greenhouse gases.

Equally worrying, the AHTEG report shows that observed changes in climate have already adversely affected biodiversity at the species and ecosystem level, with further changes in biodiversity being inevitable with further changes in climate. Indeed 89 per cent of fourth national reports received by the CBD indicate that climate change is either currently driving biodiversity loss or will drive it in the relatively near future.

The CBD also released a scientific synthesis of the impacts of ocean acidification on marine biodiversity at the Copenhagen Climate Conference. The synthesis shows that the absorption of atmospheric CO₂ has caused ocean acidity to increase by 30% since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago. Moreover, by 2050 ocean acidity could increase by 150%, 100 times faster than any change in acidity experienced in the marine environment over the last 20 million years, giving little time for evolutionary adaptation within biological systems. Since ocean acidification is irreversible on timescales of at least tens of thousands of years, substantial damage to ocean ecosystems can only be avoided by urgent and rapid reductions in global CO₂ emissions.

During this 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, we must therefore tackle the interrelated problems of biodiversity loss and climate change with a deep sense of urgency. It is for this reason that in September the 65th session of UN General Assembly will for first time discuss the importance of biodiversity, its role in sustainable development, and its role in the fight against climate change. A sense of urgency will also inform the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in October in Nagoya, Japan.

In Nagoya the Convention’s 193 Parties – nearly every nation on Earth – will together finalize a 2020 biodiversity target and a 2050 biodiversity vision as a part of a comprehensive post-2010 strategic plan 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.

Jawaharlal Nehru said that “action to be effective must be directed to clearly conceived ends.” Gathered in India, one of the world’s most bio-diverse countries and host of the Convention’s COP11, to be held in New Delhi in 2012, I hope that you will use your conference as an opportunity to help develop concrete ends in the fight to stop the loss of our biological resources. The stakes could not be higher. As the slogan the International Year reminds us: *Biodiversity is life...biodiversity is our life.*

I wish you best of luck with the conference.