



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

STATEMENT

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE THIRD MINISTERIAL SYMPOSIUM ON NATURAL
RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT: “MANY SPECIES, ONE
PLANET, ONE FUTURE”**

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NONTABURI, THAILAND**



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Life in harmony, into the future
いのちの共生を、未来へ
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

His Excellency the King of Thailand Bhumibol Adulyadej has stated: “The important thing for the survival of the Thai society is that the majority of those who work, both in the government and the private sector, still strive to work in the same direction; this is why the Thai nation still stands.”

I therefore commend you for organizing this third ministerial symposium on natural resources and the environment. Today, if the Thai nation is to continue to stand and prosper in the future, the direction you will have to work in is toward the preservation of your vast and irreplaceable natural heritage.

With upwards of 15,000 plant species, Thailand has 8 to 10 per cent of all plant species in the world. It is also extraordinarily rich in fauna, with 302 species of mammal, 982 birds, 350 reptiles, 137 amphibians, 720 freshwater fish, and 2,100 estuarine and marine fish.

Moreover, these species play an important role in the lives of the Thai people. For example, more than 1,000 species of vascular plants are used as traditional medicines, including the national flower of Thailand – *Cassia fistula*, or the golden shower tree.

However, the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO3) shows that species continues to disappear at an unprecedented rate – up to 1,000 times the natural background rate of extinction. It 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. These include air and water purification, the renewal of soil fertility, climate stabilization, and the pollination of wild plants and crops

In 2002, Heads of State and Government attending the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development agreed to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010 – however, GBO3 concludes that the 2010 biodiversity target has not been met.

A new vision of how human interact with nature is therefore required. The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity offers an opportunity to make the requisite changes. The goals of this important year 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.

The International Year was officially launched in Berlin in early January under the chairmanship of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. So far 107 governments overall have participated in more than 527 events for the International Year and over 2000 related logos have been made. Moreover, in September the 65th session of UN General Assembly will for first time ever convene a high-level segment on biodiversity with the participation of Heads of State and Government. And in October, the Convention on Biological Diversity’s tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held in Nagoya, Japan.

In Nagoya our 193 Parties – almost every nation on Earth – will together create a new biodiversity target for 2020 and a biodiversity vision for 2050 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.

Our new strategic plan will promote concerted action by all sectors of government and

society. It will emphasize that biodiversity loss is interlinked with issues such as poverty, climate change, water scarcity, growth in demand, development and international conflict – and therefore can no longer be treated as a stand-alone issue. Ultimately, the preservation of our biological resources must be mainstreamed into society at large, including our economic systems and markets.

All of us must do our part and play an active role during the International Year of Biodiversity. Allow me therefore to commend the government and people of Thailand for making this important contribution to promoting the biodiversity agenda during 2010. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us: Biodiversity is life...Biodiversity is our life.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I wish you a very successful meeting.