



**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 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE,
SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN SEMI-ARID
REGIONS**

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COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Biodiversity, climate change and development are strongly linked in drylands. Biodiversity in drylands, and the traditional knowledge associated with livelihoods in drylands, is critical for sustainable development. Unfortunately, the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands is facing a number of threats from human activities. Already 2,311 species are threatened or endangered in drylands while at least 15 species have disappeared completely from the wild. This trend shows no sign of reversing as drylands are among the most vulnerable regions to the negative impacts of climate change. Climate change negatively affects biodiversity, with serious consequences on biodiversity-based livelihoods. Desertification and biodiversity loss are exacerbated by climate change, which is threatening the delicate climatic balance under which dryland species have evolved.

Given the challenges faced by dryland biodiversity, it is important to take action now. In fact, biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation are three problems linked by common solutions. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity not only reduces the vulnerability of dryland ecosystems to the negative impacts of climate change and desertification, it is also central to livelihood development and poverty alleviation. There exist a number of management options based on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including integrated land and water management, the application of the ecosystem approach, conservation and management of key natural resources, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, and the use of agricultural biodiversity. Sustainable land management in agricultural areas and grazing land can also increase carbon sequestration, helping mitigate climate change.

We need to learn more about this important region and the value its biodiversity has in terms of providing critical ecosystem services. We need to involve indigenous peoples and local communities in decision making and we need to address the global challenges of climate change and development. Doing so is particularly important in this 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, during which time the international community is striving to find solutions to the rapid and ongoing loss of our biological resources. On September 22nd 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. And in October our tenth Conference of the Parties, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, will 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.

Also in Nagoya, the Convention on Biological Diversity, in consultation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, will convene the Rio Conventions' Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion. The Pavilion will also be held during the 16th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Cancun in November. The Pavilion will provide a unique opportunity for Parties and organisations to highlight activities linking biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. In addition, it will be particularly important for all three Rio Conventions to work closely together toward important events such as the Rio+20 Summit in 2012 and the Millennium Development Goals Review in 2015. This important meeting in Brazil provides us with an opportunity to focus on actions to be taken to address these challenges. In this spirit, I wish you a successful meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention.