



**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 INTERNATIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF
MOUNTAIN COUNTRIES ON 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,

In May the CBD Secretariat released the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3). Based on 120 fourth national reports of Parties to the Convention and the scientific literature, GBO-3 shows that species worldwide continue to disappear at up to 1,000 times the natural background rate. It warns that without concerted action massive further loss of biodiversity is projected to occur before the end of the century and that ecosystems are approaching tipping points beyond which they will be irreversibly degraded.

To make matter worse, 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. 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. This does not bode well for human wellbeing and livelihoods. For example, remaining forests worldwide provide around 1.6 billion people with food, medicines, fuel and other basic necessities, and are the origin of about 5,000 different commercial products.

As the head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Rajendra Pachauri has stated: “We are confronted by a range of environmental threats, from soil degradation and water and air pollution to deforestation and loss of biodiversity. All of these are being affected by climate change on an increasing scale. This set of impacts will affect every segment of our economy and of our population.”

This is particularly true when it comes to mountain regions, which have already experienced above average warming. Moreover there is a disproportionately high risk of extinction for endemic mountain biota, partly because of restricted geographic ranges and possibilities for migration. Warming is already driving mass extinctions of highland amphibians, and many other species of mountain ecosystems are potentially subject to sharp declines. In addition, some montane systems, particularly tropical montane cloud forest, high altitude bogs and some grasslands such as those on the Tibetan Plateau, contain large amounts of carbon in their soils, which are vulnerable to release by climatic warming.

Fortunately, the strong links between biodiversity loss and climate change make land management one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing emissions. Mechanisms to achieve emissions reductions through land use change are also consistent with mechanisms to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity. These include improved crop and grazing land management to increase soil carbon storage; restoration of cultivated peaty soils and degraded lands; afforestation; reforestation; reduced deforestation; and mapping land use change. Overall, the potential for sustainable land management practices to reduce emissions and increase sequestration of carbon is estimated at between 1 to 6 billion tons of CO₂ per year.

Healthy ecosystems can also 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. 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.

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.

All of this is why addressing climate change and biodiversity loss synergistically will play a large role in the CBD's 2011-2020 strategic plan, which will be finalized in a few weeks at our 10th Conference of the Parties (COP10) in Nagoya, Japan. It is also why the three Rio Conventions are increasingly collaborating as we work toward such important events such as the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil in 2012 (Rio +20) and the Millennium Development Goals Review in 2015. For example, the Rio Conventions have together launched an Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion to allow Parties and organisations to profile activities linking biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management and climate change mitigation and adaptation, especially at national and sub-national levels. This year the Pavilion will be held during both CBD COP10 in Nagoya and UNFCCC COP16 in Cancun. It is also anticipated that the Pavilion will be held in 2011 at UNCCD COP 10 in the Republic of Korea and at the UNFCCC COP 17 in South Africa, with its momentum carrying through to Rio +20.

I hope that we will have your support throughout this process, and that you will increasingly implement policies that take into account the two-way relationship between biodiversity loss and climate change.

Thank you.