



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**on the occasion of**

**THE OPENING SESSION OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE  
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING  
OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON  
BIOSAFETY**

**NAGOYA, JAPAN**

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Life in harmony, into the future  
いのちの共生を、未来へ  
COP 10 / MOP 5

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many centuries ago the great Japanese Zen Master Dogen said “enlightenment is intimacy with all things.” While celebrating the tenth anniversary of the signature of what was hailed as the new international environment treaty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, let us be guided today, as we gather here in Nagoya, Aichi prefecture, for this historical MOP5 meeting, bearing in mind that the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is one of the major legal international instruments that preserves our intimacy with all things, by ensuring the safe and sustainable use of the great diversity of species of our planet. However, this diversity is under threat, consequently undermining the capacity of the planet to continue providing its goods and services. As demonstrated by the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the status of biodiversity for the millions years to come will be determined by the action to be taken in the coming few decades by one single species among millions of species: us, human beings. This is the reason why thousands of us are gathered here today, at the Nagoya Congress Centre.

Prime Minister Naoto Kan has promised that “Japan shall exercise leadership to mobilize new actions”. Fifteen days after the closure of COP-9 in Bonn, I had the immense privilege to attend the kick off seminar of MOP-5 and COP-10 here in this same venue. The seminar was held with the participation of more than 1000 participants and 192 children performed the COP-10 Song. It was organized by the COP-10 promotion committee. Under the leadership of Governor Kanda and Mayor Nakamura, the committee has provided leadership and I want to pay tribute to the People and authorities of the Aichi Prefecture and the City of Nagoya for their outstanding support to make Aichi Nagoya Biosafety meeting an historical event. I also want to pay tribute to you, Excellency Michihiko Kano, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and to your able team for the excellent preparations.

A Japanese proverb says: “Beginning is easy – continuing is hard”. Since its inception, the Protocol has emerged as the leading international legal instrument on biosafety. In twelve days, the Protocol will welcome its 160<sup>th</sup> Party when Somalia’s accession enters into force, marking an increase of 15 new Parties since our last meeting in Bonn in 2006.

And yet we have just started and much more still needs to be done. Article 27 of the Protocol calls for a process to elaborate international rules and procedures on liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of living modified organisms. After six years of intense negotiations, the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol on liability and redress will be adopted. Let me pay tribute to Jimena Nieto and René Lefebvre and their friends for their remarkable achievements.

Owari Nagoya has given birth to many leading figures in Japanese history, including Toyotomi Hideyoshi. One of the three great unifiers of Japan, he is renowned throughout the country for his innovative ideas on governance and leadership. The birth of the new protocol will be the greatest gift to give to the world on the occasion of the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity and a birthday present to the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our gracious host city. It will be also recognition of the unique contribution of the capital of Malaysia.

This major step forward will open a new phase in the implementation of the Protocol supported by a ten-year strategic plan. You have before you the results of an intensive and all inclusive process of consultation and exchange of ideas through an online forum. The result is an ambitious document with five strategic objectives, 23 operational objectives and 72 indicators as well as a multi-year programme of work for 2011 to 2020. Most importantly, the strategic plan is *your* vision – it will guide *your* implementation of the Protocol and help *you* to take actions at home in partnership with key actors, including the business community and the representative of the civil society.

At the heart of the enlightened instrument that is the Cartagena Protocol is the requirement to assess the possible risks posed by living modified organisms for introduction into the environment. While the Protocol includes general guidance on how such risk assessments should be conducted, Parties have long been requesting additional, more detailed guidance. You have taken a first step toward fulfilling this wish. An ad hoc technical expert group in conjunction with an innovative series of online events have developed a superb roadmap for risk assessment, as well as guidance on specific types of LMOs. This novel process allowed unprecedented participation in the deliberations in a highly transparent and efficient manner. I wish to congratulate you for your creative thinking and your valuable inputs to this important process.

The work on risk assessment is not complete. The experts identified a number of other

areas where further guidance is needed. I urge you to take their wise counsel into account as you deliberate on this matter.

Another issue that must be at the heart of the Protocol is public awareness and participation. We must involve the public in actions to protect life on Earth: meeting the objectives of the Convention and the Protocol will require action and commitment from each and every person on the planet. At this historic meeting in Nagoya, for the first time under the Biosafety Protocol you will have a programme of work on this issue. I look forward to seeing the ambitious goals you adopt to further public awareness and participation. The celebration of 2010 International Year of Biodiversity has demonstrated the power of engaging the people of the world in protecting life on Earth.

2010 has been a historic period in the fight to save life on Earth. We began the year with launch events in Tokyo, Paris, New York, Curitiba, New Delhi and Berlin. Hundreds of events have been organized by groups from Argentina to Zambia. Thousands of children planted trees during the Green Wave on 22 May 22. We brought biodiversity to the attention of the world's leaders through the high-level meeting held during the General Assembly in New York, last month.

While biodiversity continues to disappear as never before, we cannot afford to fail and your meeting today cannot afford to fail. Dogen said: "Something you want badly enough can always be gained. No matter how fierce the enemy...or how carefully guarded the treasure, there is always a means to the goal for the earnest seeker."

Thank you for your kind attention.