



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

STATEMENT

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE BIODIVERSITY GOVERNORS' SUMMIT

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

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the birth of the Convention on Biological Diversity at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, then Prime Minister of Japan Kiichi Miyazawa said “I am convinced that environment and development are not only compatible but also mutually reinforcing in the long run.” It was in that spirit that in 2002 the national governments that are Parties to the Convention set an ambitious goal: to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010 as contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of life on Earth.

However, during this 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, the news is not good. In May the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook showed that species worldwide continue to disappear at up to 1,000 times the natural background rate of extinction. The report further 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, with dire consequences for human wellbeing.

One of the reasons the 2010 Target has not been achieved is that such a large challenge cannot be met by the efforts of national governments alone. We need an integrated approach across all sectors of government and partnerships with civil society and the business community. Only when all levels of government cooperate with the same objectives, working with all other major groups, will we be ready to take on one of the biggest environmental challenges of our time.

That is why at the Convention’s ninth Conference of Parties in 2008 in Bonn, for the first time ever an environmental multilateral environmental agreement recognized the importance of local authorities. The COP adopted decision IX/28, which encourages Parties to integrate practices by cities and local authorities into the implementation of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

Moreover, at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Aichi-Nagoya over the next two weeks, our 193 Parties will finalize and adopt a comprehensive 2011-2020 strategy for stopping biodiversity loss with the participation of all stakeholders, including local and indigenous authorities, parliamentarians, youth, and the private sector. In addition, a plan of action on cities and biodiversity will be adopted at the City Summit on Biodiversity to be held with the expected participation of more than 300 mayors.

Since most day-to-day environmental decisions are taken at the local level, governors must also play a large role on the road ahead. On that front Japan has been leading by example. For example Masaaki Kanda, the Governor of Aichi Prefecture, has been closely involved in the preparations of COP10 and Aichi Prefecture has done its all in the lead up to this historic event, helping to fulfil Governor Kanda’s vision that “biodiversity conservation should be embraced and owned by people all over the world”.

For example, an International Youth Conference on Biodiversity was held in August in Aichi, Japan, by the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Aichi Prefecture, involving young people from 66 countries with generous support from the AEON

Environmental Foundation. An excursion programme for youth to experience the Satoyama landscape was provided in collaboration with Komono Town, Mie Prefecture, giving participants exposure to Japan's centuries-old community-level traditional land-management practice.

Satoyama is one of the great gifts that Japan can give to local communities around the world. I have been to Ishikawa Prefecture several times as a guest of Governor Tanimoto and have seen first hands the benefits that are yielded when Satoyama principles are given strong support. Ishikawa has set up a project team that works on a wide variety of issues such as promoting the agricultural and fishing industries and the preservation of the natural landscape all using Satoyama techniques. They are doing so under the fitting motto "Solutions to Global Problems Start at the Local Level".

Moreover Ishikawa has prepared a New Biodiversity Vision that revolves around *Satoyama* and the reintroduction of the Crested Ibis, which became extinct in the wild in Japan in 1981. The New Biodiversity Vision of the prefecture will be presented to the participants at COP10 together with other strategies and action plans adopted at provincial and prefectural levels. This is with a view to promote action plans at local level for the implementation of the biodiversity strategic plan for 2011-2020 similar to the city and biodiversity action plans to be adopted at the City Summit on Biodiversity.

As Governor Tanimoto has stated: "The initiatives related to conservation of biodiversity are not limited to making people aware and these initiatives are not about forcing people to carry any burden either. Our aim is create an environment where administration, industry and local people will share a common awareness of the matter and will work towards a common goal."

I would like to encourage the governors of Japan to increasingly partner with civil society and the business community to implement satoyama principles in their prefectures. As the satoyama spirit spreads internationally, you need to continue to lead by example within your borders. You need to continue to take it to heart that we are not outside agents attempting to preserve distant ecosystems, but are deeply dependent on biodiversity for everything that makes life as we know it possible: food, medicine, and the many other biological goods that sustain both our health and economic productivity; air purification, crop pollination, and the countless irreplaceable services provided by healthy ecosystems; and the spiritual and cultural fulfillment offered by contact with the natural world.

As we proceed through COP10 over the next two weeks to the closing ceremonies of the International Year of Biodiversity in Ishikawa Prefecture on December 18th and into the 2011 International Year of Forests, let us keep in mind that, as Governor Tanimoto has said, "Biological diversity is the foundation that supports the life of all life forms including humans and the conservation of such biological diversity is as important a global environmental issue as the measures against global warming."

Or as the slogan of the International Year of Biodiversity reminds us: Biodiversity is life...biodiversity is OUR life.

Thank you for your kind attention.