



STATEMENT

BY MR AHMED DJOGLAF

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

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE INTERNATIONAL TIGER FORUM

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Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada
Tel : +1 514 288 2220, Fax : +1 514 288 6588
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



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いのちの共生を、未来へ
COP 10 / MOP 5

Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In a 2004 poll conducted by Animal Planet in which more than 50,000 viewers from 73 countries participated, the tiger was voted the world's favourite animal, beating out even man's traditional best friend the dog. This is no doubt because tigers are among the most striking and memorable of the world's large animals and hold a prominent place in the mythology and folklore of so many cultures. And yet if the tiger captures the human imagination more than any other animal, how sad is it that we continue to drive this beautiful creature closer and closer to extinction year by year?

Fortunately the countries undertaking the Global Tiger Initiative have recognized the deep and urgent need to take measures to prevent the loss of the tiger. The President of the World Bank Robert B. Zoellick addressed this topic at the high-level segment of the last month's 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan. There he pointed out that "The GTI is taking a highly methodical approach to the challenge of saving the wild tiger... all tiger range countries came together on a common platform to exchange knowledge and best practices and then to agree on a shared goal of doubling the number of wild tigers across the range from about 3,200 today to 7,000 by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger."

It was no coincidence that Mr. Zoellick highlighted the GTI at COP10, where the countries of the world gathered to finalize the international community's biodiversity strategy for the next decade. At this historic meeting, the so-called "Aichi Target" was adopted and includes 20 headline targets, organized under five strategic goals that seek to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, reduce the pressures on biodiversity, safeguard biodiversity at all levels, enhance the benefits provided by biodiversity, and provide for capacity-building.

Among the targets, the Parties agreed to at least halve and where feasible bring close to zero the rate of loss of natural habitats including forests, to place 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas under protection, and restore at least 15 per cent of degraded areas. The Parties also adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization.

All of this was done with the participation of wildlife conservation organizations and their partners. For example, the World Bank, World Wildlife Fund, IUCN, Conservation International, Ministry of Environment of Japan, and various other NGOs and corporations held events to raise public awareness on wildlife conservation issues. In addition, Conservation International hosted a reception with Japanese Minister of Environment Ryu Matsumoto and the American actor and conservationist Harrison Ford on protection of critical ecosystems.

Special attention was given to the plight of the tiger. The GTI joined conservation organizations and the Government of Japan in holding awareness-raising events and running exhibits at the Interactive Biodiversity Fair next to the Nagoya Convention Center. Moreover, the GTI's October 28 high level event brought 4 ministers of tiger range countries to the stage together with Mr. Zoellick and Global Environment Facility CEO Monique Barbut to urge the

international community to increase their efforts in the lead up to this pivotal forum in St. Petersburg.

Indeed, synergizing the GTI's activities with the broader attempts to achieve the Aichi Target and implement the Nagoya Protocol will be an important way to help save the tiger. Not only is the GTI's mandate in keeping with the vision that emerged from the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit, it is also perfectly in line with the original vision of the Convention. Article 8 of its text calls on Parties, amongst others things, to:

- Promote the protection of ecosystems, natural habitats and the maintenance of viable populations of species in natural surroundings;
- Promote environmentally sound and sustainable development in areas adjacent to protected areas with a view to furthering protection of these areas; and
- Rehabilitate and restore degraded ecosystems and promote the recovery of threatened species, inter alia, through the development and implementation of plans or other management strategies.

Article 9c further calls on Parties to adopt measures for the recovery and rehabilitation of threatened species and for their reintroduction into their natural habitats under appropriate conditions.

I would therefore like to thank the countries participating in the GTI and their partners for the leadership they are now showing in their attempts to save the tiger. I would also like to thank them for playing an integral role at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit and for taking part in this important forum here in St. Petersburg, with especial thanks going to Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation and the World Bank for jointly organizing this event.

Rest assured that we at the Secretariat stand ready to help the GTI over the next decade as it strives to achieve its goal of increasing the number of tigers in the wild. With the international community having come to its historic consensus at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit on how to address biodiversity loss over the coming decade, now is the time to turn plans into action for the tiger and the many other species that are rapidly moving toward extinction. As the great Russian writer Ivan Turgenev said, "If we wait for the moment when everything, absolutely everything is ready, we shall never begin."

Thank you for your kind attention.