



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



STATEMENT BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
ARAB REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON
BIODIVERSITY AND FINANCE**

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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,

Just a month ago and in the early hours of Saturday morning, the Prime Minister of Japan, HE Mr. Naoto Kan, from Hanoi, phoned the President of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), HE Mr. Ryu Matsumoto, in Nagoya, and offered congratulations on the historic success of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit.

Two weeks ago, in her opening statement to the 39th meeting of the Council of the Global Environment Facility, Ms Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson, stated that the Nagoya conference on biodiversity was historic.

Indeed, history was made. The summit was attended by the 18,650 accredited participants representing the 193 Parties to the CBD and their partners. 130 ministers, as well as Heads of State and governments, attended the High-level Segment of the Nagoya Summit. The representatives of 650 municipalities including 200 mayors, 122 legislators from 60 countries, 34 bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, were gathered for the same cause.

- The Nagoya Outcome consists of three important decisions:
- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization;
- The Aichi Target, a ten year global strategy for biodiversity from 2011-2020;
- The Resource Mobilization Strategy for Biodiversity.

The Nagoya Protocol was meant to operationalize the third objective of the Convention, 18 years after its signature in Rio de Janeiro, and established the foundation for a new international economic and ecological order based on respect for nature in its diversity and equity. The signing ceremony of this historic instrument will be held in New York on 2 February 2011 with the participation of Heads of State and in conjunction with the official launch of the International Year of Forests. On 7 March 2011, the signing ceremony of the Kuala Lumpur–Nagoya supplementary protocol on liability and redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will take place also in New York in conjunction with the preparatory meeting of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. I invite all Arab States to proactively participate in the two important signing ceremonies, and to elaborate financial and technical support you may need to ratify the two historic international legal instruments.

The “Aichi Target” provided a blueprint for global biodiversity agenda for the next decade. The broad-based five strategic goals aim 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. To this end, 20 ambitious yet realistic headline targets were adopted, including several numeric targets by 2020:

- The rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero;
- At least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved;
- Restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems.

To achieve these targets can be very challenging, in particular in the Arab region. The unique and highly vulnerable biodiversity and ecosystems of the Arab region are under tremendous pressures from increased human activities, driven by unsustainable production and consumption patterns worldwide and population growth. Some habitats are showing signs of irreversible collapse after being pushed beyond their ecological thresholds or “tipping points”, as concluded by the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook.

Studies have identified 1,084 threatened species in the Arab region. 24 per cent of fish, 22 percent of birds, and 20 percent of mammals in the region are threatened with extinction. An analysis of the national reports by nine Arab countries and other countries concluded that all countries were off track in their efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target of substantially reducing the loss of biodiversity.

Climate change can bring further damage to the already deteriorating biodiversity in the Arab countries. A 1°C rise in temperature will make extinct 10 percent of all the species. Many unique Arab ecosystems are especially vulnerable to climate change, such as the coastal mountain ranges of the Red Sea, the cedar forests in Lebanon and Syria, and the mangroves in Qatar.

The organization of this regional workshop on biodiversity and finance is a timely response to the increasing biodiversity challenges in the Arab region as well as to the Nagoya outcomes, by bringing together international targets and regional interests. The regional workshop provides the first opportunity for the region to consider relevance, to the Arab region, of the 20 headline targets adopted by the Nagoya Conference, elaborate national and regional corresponding targets in light of the Aichi Target, and develop steps to develop or update national and regional biodiversity strategy and action plans in light of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan of the Convention. Of course, financial implications of national and regional responses to the Nagoya outcomes must be considered upfront.

In Nagoya, the Conference of the Parties further elaborated the strategy for resource mobilization of the Convention, and was committed to substantially increasing resources (financial, human and technical) from all sources, including innovative financial mechanisms, balanced with the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020. The strategy for resource mobilization of the Convention offers a range of tools:

- Improve information base on funding needs, gaps and priorities;
- Strengthen national capacity for resource utilization and mobilize domestic financial resources;
- Strengthen existing financial institutions and, promote replication and scaling-up of successful financial mechanisms and instruments;
- Explore new and innovative financial mechanisms at all levels;
- Mainstream biological diversity in development cooperation plans and priorities;
- Build capacity for resource mobilization and utilization and promote South-South cooperation;
- Enhance implementation of access and benefit-sharing initiatives and mechanisms.

One important element of the strategy for resource mobilization of the Convention is to encourage the development of country-specific resource mobilization strategies. The importance of this component has become even more evident under the new Strategic Plan of the Convention. Country-specific resource mobilization strategies offer a more near-term instrument for mobilizing funding actions to implement longer-term national goals set out in national biodiversity strategies and action plans. As shown by the indicative guidelines before this workshop, country-specific resource mobilization strategies may be part of, additional to, or complementary to national biodiversity strategies and action plans, depending upon the status of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Country-specific resource mobilization strategies can be a distinct new feature of planning efforts to address the Aichi 2020 biodiversity target.

Innovative financial mechanisms are exploratory by nature, but some new mechanisms have already yielded considerable financial results. For instance, innovative financing for development, though not for biodiversity, such as International Airline Solidarity Contributions, International Financial Facility, Advance Market Commitment, already generated about \$2.5 billion in additional funding, since 2006. The implicit values of biodiversity and ecosystem services are believed to be much larger than combined global gross domestic products. Payment for ecosystem services, biodiversity offsets, market for green products and environmentally fiscal reforms are just a few examples. Their potentials, relevance and usefulness to the Arab region as well as your experiences are thus an interesting subject for consideration by this workshop.

The documentation prepared for the workshop has demonstrated ample opportunities of tapping external financial support. Most bilateral and multilateral financial and technical cooperation institutions have established Arab regional programmes, but must be presented with carefully elaborated and prioritized biodiversity funding needs, in structuring their own programming priorities. This workshop offers a unique opportunity to explore the role of various multilateral and bilateral financial and development agencies in achieving the Aichi 2020 biodiversity target, not only in terms of national needs, but also in terms of regional and sub-regional collaboration. The outcome of this workshop can constitute a powerful voice that will lead the message of biodiversity to be heard and integrated by donors.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) of the League of Arab States for initiating this workshop, and thank the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for West Asia for co-organizing. This is an exemplary partnership between the Secretariat and two regional bodies. I would like also to congratulate the participants for the commitment demonstrated to be the first region in the world to meet to discuss the implementation of the Nagoya outcomes. I wish you every success and you can always count on the continued support of your secretariat.

Thank you for your kind attention.
