Convention on Biological Diversity

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STATEMENT

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ON THE OCCASION OF

THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION OF THE FOURTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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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,

It is a pleasure to address you today. Please accept my sincere thanks for including me in this inspiring event. I would also like to thank the Government of Indonesia, Bali, and the Food and Agriculture Organization for organizing and hosting this important conference.

Last year, during the International Year of Biodiversity, the world was given a stark warning. Global Biodiversity Outlook 3, the flagship report of the Convention on Biological Diversity, drawing on the expertise of scientists from around the world, and mobilizing the best information from national reports, warned that our way of doing business would lead to tipping points beyond which the rich ecosystems that sustain us, would collapse, leaving us all poorer.

During the last decades, worldwide biodiversity has been lost at an unprecedented rate in all the ecosystems, including agro-ecosystems. Homogenization of agricultural production systems, mainly due to intensification of agricultural systems coupled with specialization by plant and animals breeders and the harmonizing effects of globalization, is one of the greatest causes of agricultural biodiversity loss, through genetic erosion and the increasing levels of genetic vulnerability of specialized crops and livestock. According to the FAO, it is estimated that about three-quarters of the genetic diversity found in agricultural crops has been lost over the last century, and this genetic erosion continues. For example, today, 90 percent of our food energy and protein comes from only 15 plant and 8 animal species, with disturbing consequences for nutrition and food security. Wheat, rice and maize alone provide more than 50 percent of the global plant-based energy intake. In addition to agricultural biodiversity, modern agricultural practices can also impact biodiversity in other ecosystems through several ways such as unsustainable demands on water, overgrazing, as well as excessive use of nutrients and chemical inputs to control weeds, pests and diseases that result in problems of pollution and eutrophication. Furthermore, land and habitat conversion to large-scale agricultural production also cause significant loss of biodiversity.

Biodiversity and agriculture are strongly interrelated because while biodiversity is critical for agriculture, agriculture can also contribute to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Indeed, sustainable agriculture both promotes and is enhanced by biodiversity. Maintenance of this biodiversity is essential for the sustainable production of food and other agricultural products and the benefits these provide to humanity, including food security, nutrition and livelihoods. The major challenge for agriculture is to ensure food security, adequate nutrition and stable livelihoods for all, now and in the future, by increasing food production while adopting sustainable and efficient agriculture, sustainable consumption of resources, and landscape-level planning to ensure the preservation of biodiversity. Agricultural biodiversity also performs ecosystem services such as soil and water conservation, maintenance of soil fertility and biota, and pollination, all of which are essential to human survival. In addition, genetic diversity of agricultural biodiversity provides species with the ability to adapt to changing environment and evolve, by increasing their tolerance to frost, high temperature, drought and water-logging, as well as their resistance to particular diseases, pests and parasites for example.

The time for choice is now and as the President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono recently said: “the next economic war or conflict can be over the scarce resources if we do not manage it together”. The actions that we take in the next decade will determine the fate of biodiversity for hundreds, if not thousands of years to come.

This is why the global community took the first steps towards a sustainable future. This year, the United Nations Decade for Biodiversity begins. The Decade is our opportunity to integrate policies and practices into all aspects of our lives that can guarantee the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity, all while ensuring that the benefits from the use of genetic resources are shared with equity.

Preserving agricultural biodiversity and plant genetic resources plays a large role in the Convention's 2011-2020 Strategic Plan, which was recently adopted at COP10 in Nagoya, Japan. The Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will not only be the framework for action under the Convention on Biological Diversity, but with the endorsement of the United Nations General Assembly, has become the basis for all action on biodiversity at the international, regional and national levels. The "Aichi Targets", a set of 20 headline targets, organized under five strategic goals, that 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.

In order to achieve these ambitious global goals, actions in support of the Aichi Targets will be required at subnational and local levels. In Nagoya, Parties endorsed a plan of action on cities and biodiversity adopted by the Nagoya Biodiversity City summit attended by more than 200 mayors. 122 legislators from around the world attending the GLOBE meeting on parliamentarians and biodiversity declared their support for the implementation of the new Strategic Plan. Representatives of 34 bilateral and multilateral donor agencies agreed to translate the plan into their respective development cooperation priorities. At the Ecosystems Pavilion, heads of agencies and international organizations discussed ways to better integrate actions to combat biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation. And a Multi-Year Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development was adopted by the G77 and China.

One of the main achievements at COP 10, of direct relevance to the International Treaty, is the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (Nagoya Protocol). The Nagoya Protocol builds on the Convention on Biological Diversity and supports the further implementation of one of its three objectives: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Heads of State at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, September 2002) first recognized the need for an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits and called for negotiations to be carried out within the framework of the Convention. The Convention's Conference of the Parties responded at its seventh meeting, in 2004, by mandating its Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to elaborate and negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing in order to effectively implement Articles 15 (Access to Genetic Resources) and 8(j) (Traditional Knowledge) of the Convention and its three objectives.

After six years of negotiations, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted the Nagoya Protocol on 29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. The Nagoya Protocol will enter into force 90 days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession. The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, taking place in India from 8 to 19 October 2012, is the target for convening the Nagoya Protocol's first meeting of the Parties. To achieve this, the Nagoya Protocol must enter into force no later than 8 October 2012, with the fiftieth instrument of ratification deposited no later than 10 July 2012.

The relationship between the Nagoya Protocol and the International Treaty was duly considered by governments during the negotiations of the Nagoya Protocol. As a result, the preamble of the Protocol makes a number of key references which are worth highlighting to you today as they are related to the topic of this meeting.

Indeed, the Protocol recognizes:

- the importance of genetic resources to food security, public health, biodiversity conservation, and the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change,
- the special nature of agricultural biodiversity, its distinctive features and problems needing distinctive solutions,

- the interdependence of all countries with regard to genetic resources for food and agriculture as well as their special nature and importance for achieving food security worldwide and for sustainable development of agriculture in the context of poverty alleviation and climate change and acknowledges the fundamental role of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in this regard,

The Protocol, in its preamble, also recalls that the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing established under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was developed in harmony with the Convention and recognizes that international instruments related to access and benefit-sharing should be mutually supportive with a view to achieving the objectives of the Convention. Of particular relevance to the relationship with the International Treaty is Article 4(4) which states that "Where a specialized international access and benefit-sharing instrument applies that is consistent with, and does not run counter to the objectives of the Convention and this Protocol, this Protocol does not apply for the Party or Parties to the specialized instrument in respect of the specific genetic resource covered by and for the purposes of the specialized instrument."

The Nagoya Protocol's early entry into force is strategically important for the Convention's successful implementation. The Nagoya Protocol significantly advances the Convention's third objective by providing greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources. Specific obligations to support compliance with domestic legislation or regulatory requirements of the Party providing genetic resources and contractual obligations reflected in mutually agreed terms are a significant innovation of the Nagoya Protocol. These compliance provisions as well as provisions establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources will contribute to ensuring the sharing of benefits when genetic resources leave a Party providing genetic resources.

In addition, the Protocol's provisions on access to traditional knowledge held by indigenous and local communities when it is associated with genetic resources will strengthen the ability of these communities to benefit from the use of their knowledge, innovations and practices. By promoting the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and by strengthening the opportunities for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from their use, the Protocol will create incentives to conserve biological diversity, sustainably use its components, and further enhance the contribution of biological diversity to sustainable development and human well-being.

Finally, the Protocol also provides that Parties shall, in the development of their national access and benefit-sharing legislation or regulatory requirements, consider the importance of genetic resources for food and agriculture and their special role for food security (Article 8 (c)).

Given the key relationship between the Protocol and the International Treaty, cooperation will be essential to ensure that both instruments are implemented in a mutually supportive manner. In light of this, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Nagoya between the Secretariats of the CBD and the International Treaty to support our close collaboration.

Thanks to the financial support provided by the Global Environment Facility, the SCBD will be carrying out a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities over the next biennium to support ratification and early entry into force of the Protocol by the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2012. Among these activities, capacity-building workshops will be jointly organized with the International Treaty Secretariat with a view to support the implementation of both agreements in a mutually supportive manner.

With this in mind, I urge you today in Bali to continue the work on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, particularly as it coincides with the Aichi Targets and the 2011-2020 International Decade of Biodiversity. I also urge you to further consider enhanced

collaboration among the biodiversity-related Conventions and UNEP, along with implementation issues at the regional and country levels.

2011 is the International Year of Forests. As repositories of 80 percent of the terrestrial biodiversity of the world, these are among the most important sources of ecosystem services. In this first year of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, I urge you to start here.

Thank you for your kind attention.