



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of the

**GLOBAL TAXONOMY INITIATIVE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP
TOWARDS ACHIEVING AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS 9 AND 19 FOR
WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

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**Convention on
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this capacity building workshop for the Global Taxonomy Initiative within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Senegal for hosting this workshop in the beautiful city of Dakar. I would also like to acknowledge with great thanks the financial support provided by the government of Japan, which allowed all of us to gather here. I would also like to express my gratitude to the National Museum of Natural History in France, the French Institute for Development Research and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility for their support to this workshop.

The objective of this workshop is to strengthen regional capacities to implement the Convention's Strategic Plan in particular by addressing invasive alien species, a direct cause of biodiversity decline.

Biodiversity is of fundamental importance to human wellbeing. This is particularly so in Western and Central Africa. In this region a wide range of ecosystems— forests, savannahs, deserts, rivers, mountains, mangroves and seas - accommodate rich biodiversity. In turn this biodiversity provides the ecosystem services which directly and indirectly support the livelihoods of the more than three million inhabitants of the region.

In 2010, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and 20 ambitious biodiversity targets known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Among these, Target 9 directly pertains to invasive alien species and requires the global community to ensure that *“By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment”*.

You may recall that in 2002 the Conference of the Parties adopted a set of *“Guiding Principles for Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species”*. These guiding principles are one of the main tools at Parties’ disposal in their efforts to achieve Aichi Target 9. Parties have been urged to implement these guiding principles by developing national invasive species strategies and action plans as a part of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Developing national invasive species strategies has proven challenging for many countries. However,

the ongoing work to revise and update NBSAPs provides an opportune time to take a fresh look at invasive alien species and how this important issue may be reflected in national biodiversity priorities.

A number of challenges must be overcome if we, as a global community, are going to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 9. We must enhance our capacity to identify and rapidly respond to the risks resulting from the introduction of alien species. Further, those ministries, sectors and communities which are not familiar with invasive alien species must be made aware of the threats they pose. Taxonomic institutions are particularly well suited to help address these challenges as they have the expertise required to identify and study the distribution of invasive alien species and can help to prioritize the species that need to be managed or controlled most urgently.

Recognizing the important role of taxonomist, the COP, at its eleventh meeting in Hyderabad, India, adopted a Capacity-building Strategy for the Global Taxonomy Initiative. Through the capacity-building strategy the international community has expressed its willingness to improve the biodiversity science base and to share biodiversity related knowledge. As such, this capacity building strategy will also directly contribute to the attainment of another Aichi Biodiversity Target, namely Target 19.

I wish you all very successful and productive discussions over the coming days and as always the Secretariat stand ready to support your efforts on this issue. At the end of my remarks I would just like to say that “Impossible n'est pas français”. Vous pouvez atteindre l'objectif d'Aichi pour la biodiversité dans cette région!”