



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of the

**Regional Workshop for South, East and Southeast Asia on the Preparation of the Fifth
National Report and Regional Scenario Analysis**

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**Convention on
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Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

This is the third of a series of workshops organized by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with partners to support Parties to the Convention in their preparations of the fifth national report. It complements and builds on capacity building workshops on National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans, on indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and on synergies between conventions. I want to welcome you all to this event which is being made possible through the financial support from the Governments of Korea and Japan and the technical input on the use of scenarios, provided by the Government of the Netherlands.

I am particularly grateful to the Government of Korea, the host of our next COP, and to our colleagues from the Ministry of Environment for hosting this workshop and for all their efforts in making the arrangements and facilitating your arrival to this venue.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fifth national report will provide the main source of information for taking stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will be undertaken at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2014 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, a beautiful city to host the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. This review at COP 12 will provide the basis for Parties to decide on further measures to be taken to achieve the Aichi Targets by 2020.

Obviously such a review will not be possible or meaningful without a significant number of fifth national reports submitted by Parties in time. And it will depend on a frank and open discussion - first within each country and subsequently at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties - to analyse how much progress is truly being made, where the main constraints lie, and how to navigate around them. You will be aware that the deadline for submission of your fifth national report, as agreed by COP 10, is just over ten months away. Bearing this in mind, I wish to strongly urge all Parties, particularly those present here, to initiate a process to prepare this report as early as possible.

The fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO 4), another focus of this workshop, will provide a basis for the mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 and its 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, drawing on information from the fifth national reports and other sources. It is anticipated that GBO 4 will consist of several products to be published for COP 12 and during 2015, so as to also coincide with the evaluation of the progress made in implementing the Millennium Development Goals and to enable an analysis of the contribution of biodiversity towards their achievement. Again, the timely submission of fifth national reports and other contributions and inputs from Parties will be crucial for the preparation of GBO 4.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are already in year three since the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 was agreed in Nagoya. By 2014, when the fifth national reports are due and when COP 12 undertakes its evaluation again here in Asia, we will be almost half way into the implementation of the Strategic Plan and we need to know where we stand, which measures have been taken and what is being set in motion so as to achieve the desired outcomes by 2020. The third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook showed that the world community had failed to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Target, set earlier in 2002. We cannot afford to fail again. We have to urgently do those things that require immediate action - and we have to put the measures in place now that will turn around trends in biodiversity, particularly those that are slow to respond. The sessions in this workshop focusing on the analysis of policy options and scenarios, which is graciously offered by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, should support your analyses of which mix of measures and policies might be most effective in achieving the outcomes you are aiming for within your respective countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asia is rich in biodiversity and biological resources, and we know that these are essential for the development of the continent. We also know that this region is economically vibrant and unprecedented economic development brings unprecedented challenges to the environment and to biodiversity. Overuse or overexploitation of natural resources, habitat fragmentation due to land use change, environmental pollution, deforestation, illegal trade in plants and animals and their products, invasive species and climate change all exert significant pressures on biodiversity. Poverty in some countries is also a contributing factor to biodiversity loss. Clearly, capacities and resources for implementation of the CBD and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) are limited but let that not be an excuse to give up and do nothing. At its 12th meeting in September 2012 in Bangkok, the

ASEAN Environment Ministers agreed to enhance efforts to protect, conserve, and sustainably utilize ASEAN's biodiversity by effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for the Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; and to accelerate efforts to develop and update the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. ASEAN Environment Ministers also called on Governments to prepare to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.

In her opening statement the President of COP11, Ms. Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister of Environment and Forests of the Government of India, said that particularly in light of the economic crisis, countries must invest in natural capital so as to ensure that the ecosystem services on which life on earth depends continue uninterrupted and she called Parties to commit to action to reverse biodiversity loss and thereby create a better world for future generations. I agree with Ms. Natarajan: we can no longer afford to ignore the values of biodiversity in the national balance sheets. As recognized by Environment Ministers of South Asian countries at the 12th meeting of the Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme in November 2010, immediately after COP 10, biodiversity is essential for human life which generates goods and services including the provision of food and medicine, regulation of climate and water flow, supporting of soil formation and cultural values, and healthy ecosystems play a role in moderating the effects of climate change. They urged Governments and stakeholders to take actions to curb the continuing loss of biodiversity.

UNEP's work on the economics of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the green economy, as well as the Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services – or in brief Waves project – led by the World Bank, as well as the pilot testing of the new Experimental Environmental and Economic Accounting guidelines under the UN Statistics Division, among others, are developing the tools and capacities to bring environmental considerations into economic decision making and planning processes. They should enable us to work on a transition towards sustainability and provide a key for the development of sustainable solutions to address biodiversity loss, solutions that do not limit but are aligned with the countries' development aspirations. Together we need to demonstrate and implement ecosystem-based solutions to our social and economic challenges. Let this workshop be a contribution towards that thinking.

Having said all this, I sincerely hope that this workshop will be helpful to you all for preparing the fifth national report and contributing to GBO 4. As I have emphasized at several occasions, including at COP 11, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan need to be strengthened at various levels because they are crucial for policy making processes

including national biodiversity planning and decision making. I encourage you to see the national report as an extension of the process on updating your NBSAP in which you are all engaged, a process in which all relevant stakeholders can participate and which can be used to mobilize public support and actions for the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

In conclusion, I wish you very productive discussions over the next few days. I look forward to receiving your fifth national report before or by March 2014 and, as always, the Secretariat stands ready to support your efforts in this process.

Thank you.