



**STATEMENT BY**  
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**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**  
**1ST ASIA PARKS CONGRESS**

**SENDAI CITY, MIYAGI PREFECTURE**  
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**Convention on**  
**Biological Diversity**

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to you all and thank you very much to the organizers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia Parks Congress for allowing me to convey a few words on behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest sympathy to the people of Japan in consideration of the tragic East Japan earthquake of 2011. Furthermore, I would like to congratulate you for your remarkable recovery which allows you to host this Congress today. Japan has led the international community by hosting significant events like the historic 10th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in 2010 and even in the midst of a natural disaster, it has always promoted the importance of implementation of the many decisions of the CBD and of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 through its Japan Biodiversity Fund; for this and so much more, you serve as an example to the rest of the world.

The CBD has always had a strong focus on protected areas and today I am very happy to see the region of Asia addressing the challenges faced by its national parks and protected areas. The Programme of Work on Protected Areas, agreed in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia at the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the CBD in 2004, has been very important in advancing the protected areas agenda, including the different categories and governance regimes of protected areas, and in recognizing community conserved areas and the rights of indigenous and local communities to govern such areas. As most of you know, in 2010 governments of the world agreed to a challenging set of 20 targets in order to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020 and promote the benefits from biodiversity to human well-being. Although these Aichi Biodiversity targets are challenging, they are not impossible, but action needs to be taken immediately as we have only seven years left to achieve them.

In this particular occasion, let's remember that target 11 calls for the protection of at least 17% of terrestrial areas as well as at least 10% of marine areas by 2020. But it goes further than just covering the hectares; the areas must be well managed, well connected and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape including other kinds of effective area-based conservation measures, such as community based conservation areas. The establishment of comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively managed and financially secure protected area networks is a critical strategy not only for biodiversity conservation, but for securing ecosystem goods and services, enabling climate change mitigation and adaptation, helping countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They are an investment in environmental sustainability.

However, let's keep in mind that protected areas are relevant and contribute to the achievement of many Aichi Targets, not only Target 11. In particular I would like to call special attention to Target 5, that calls for the reduction in loss of important habitats such as forests;

Target 8 that calls for sustainable fisheries; Target 12 on the prevention of species extinction and the improvement of conservation status for threatened species; Target 13 on reduction of genetic erosion; Target 14 on ecosystem services and Target 15 that calls special attention to the topic of restoration. Protected areas are a key strategy to achieve all of these other targets.

Currently, Parties to the CBD are actively working to update their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans to be reviewed at the forthcoming 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in PyeongChang, Republic of Korea, in October 2014. Effective biodiversity strategies must integrate different sectors including fisheries, agriculture, energy, development and others. They must also ensure that the development and strengthening of protected areas and the recognition of indigenous and community conserved areas are not done in isolation, but instead that protected areas are considered as a solution to achieve many of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, not only Target 11.

The outstanding elements of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 are addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and placing importance on the provision of ecosystem services. In this regard, I would like to refer to Japan's Sanriku Fukko National Park as a unique example of a protected area focusing on ecosystem services. One of the key purposes for the Sanriku Fukko National Park is to contribute to revitalizing the economy and improving human well-being in the earthquake stricken area through conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. I have the upmost respect for this initiative of the Government of Japan and relevant stakeholders that take the aftermath of such an unprecedented tragic disaster as a chance to realize a sustainable society, rooted in biodiversity. Furthermore, I learned that the Niju-Maru Project in Japan, which is led by Japanese civil society for biodiversity and IUCN-Japan, has been promoting all 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. This comprehensive approach throughout the whole community, like Niju-Maru has conducted, that brings together government and civil society is a good model of implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

And so speaking of initiatives, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate you in advance for the initiatives to be presented in this important event, mainly the Asian Protected Areas Philosophy which will act as a catalyst for cooperation, improved governance and integration of conservation and human development; the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CATS) to ensure effective management of protected areas with tiger populations and the presentation of the Protected Planet - Asia report, the first regional version, that will measure progress toward Aichi Target 11 and related targets. All these initiatives represent the materialization of international cooperation, which is extremely important as we scale up conservation efforts and consider ecoregions, biomes and work on transboundary conservation initiatives.

We know that the financial gap to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets is tremendous. The High Level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity has produced an initial estimate that up to US\$ 440 billion per year is needed,

and only a fraction of that is currently available. In 2012 at the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of the CBD in Hyderabad, India, donor countries agreed to double the total biodiversity-related international financial resource flows by 2015 and at least to maintain these levels until 2020. Achieving this doubling of aid will require not only more resources to be directed toward biodiversity from international and bilateral agencies, but it will require national governments and civil society to develop innovative financial mechanisms as a way to scale up the total amount of domestic resources toward biodiversity. Systems such as ecotourism, Payment for Ecosystem Services and debt swaps for nature have been demonstrated as particularly effective in some situations. This will require new partnerships and alliances to be formed.

Through support from several governments, including the government of Japan, the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity itself has initiatives to facilitate partnerships for financing biodiversity. The LifeWeb Initiative is a sustainable financing initiative that facilitates funding for the area-based Aichi Biodiversity Targets, both terrestrial and marine, through the development of partnerships. LifeWeb is actively seeking initiatives with commitments from developing countries and countries with economies in transition that will help them advance their current efforts for protected areas, indigenous and community conserved areas, marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and restoration.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative, a platform to facilitate the achievement of the marine targets 6 and 11 works to build capacity, monitor progress and enhance communication for all countries through partnerships with different sectors and stakeholders, including fisheries.

The CBD “Biodiversity Champions Initiative,” offers a platform to profile advances in implementation of the targets as a way to recognize and track commitments, attract further financial support and to encourage other parties to do more. I urge you to utilize these initiatives to speed implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

An incredible source of biodiversity, Eastern Asia makes up 20% of the world’s landmass; 15% of the territorial area in the region constitutes protected areas. But we must also remember that Asia remains the most densely populated region in the world responsible for producing more than 30% of global carbon emissions. And although most countries in the region are well beyond global targets for terrestrial protected areas in terms of coverage, the region must continue to maximize the efforts to ensure progress towards effective management of protected areas and the protection of marine areas and lowland forests. Out of 29 countries that make up the Eastern Asian region, only 12 have submitted their PoWPA Action Plans to the Convention; I take the opportunity to encourage you all to share your roadmap on how best you will ensure these Aichi targets will be met. The experience for how to achieve this exists in the region, but it has to be shared and it will require the development of strong partnerships.

The Secretariat is ready to work with all of you in the spirit of collaboration, so that the outcomes of this event can provide important inputs to the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress in

Sydney, Australia, and furthermore to the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention to be held in PyeongChang, Republic of Korea, in October 2014.

We will now hear from Dr. Chong-chun KIM, the Executive Director of the National Park Service in the Republic of Korea about the many preparations that they are taking as the host country for the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the CBD, to be held in PyeongChang, in October of 2014, one year from today.

In closing, I would like again to thank the conference organizers for allowing me to provide this statement and I wish you all the best for this first Asian Parks Conference.

Thank you.