

**STATEMENT BY AHMED DJOGLAF
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AT
THE OPENING SESSION OF THE
TENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
*Nagoya, 18 October 2010***

Mr. President
Ladies and gentlemen,

From Curitiba to Bonn, and from Bonn to Nagoya, here we are gathered as a community of nations representing the family of the people of the world at this largest, biggest biodiversity conference in the history of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Here we are as a community of nations not for just another United Nations meeting, but for the most important meeting on biodiversity in the history of the United Nations. This is indeed a defining moment in the history of mankind.

As Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki stated “The problem of Nature is the problem of human life”. However, today human life is a problem for Nature.

Assembled at this historical Aichi-Nagoya biodiversity summit, we the 16,000 participants assembled today from all over the world, representing the 193 Parties and their partners, are called upon to address the unprecedented loss of biodiversity seriously compounded by global warming. To do so, let us have the courage to look in the eyes of our children and admit that we have failed, individually and collectively, to fulfil the Johannesburg promise made to them by the 110 Heads of State and Government to substantially reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010. Let us look in the eyes of our children and admit that we continue to lose biodiversity at an unprecedented rate, thus mortgaging their future. The 170 fourth national reports received by Parties to-date confirm that we continue to lose biodiversity at an unprecedented rate. The third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook demonstrates that, today, the rate of loss of biodiversity is up to one thousand times higher than the background and historical rate of extinction. The report predicts that if we allow the current trends to continue we shall soon reach a tipping point with irreversible and irreparable damage to the capacity of the planet to continue sustaining life on Earth. The report warns that the status of biodiversity for the next million years will be determined by the action or inaction, of one specie, we human being of mankind in the coming decades.

As stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, business as usual is no more an option for mankind. Business as usual is therefore not an option on the agenda of your meeting today. Indeed, as Albert Einstein said, “the approach that has created a problem

cannot be used to solve it”; we need a new approach, we need to reconnect with nature and live in harmony with nature into the future. To do so, you are called upon to adopt the Aichi-Nagoya Strategic Plan for the next decade with a vision for 2050. This is not another plan; it will be, as recommended by last month’s historic New York summit on biodiversity, the overarching coordinated global biodiversity framework of the whole biodiversity family, including the United Nations system.

“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean,” said Ryunosuke Satoro. The new biodiversity vision of the twenty-first century requires the full engagement of all stakeholders without exception, including the business community. This is the very objective of the high-level dialogue on business and biodiversity to be held next week at the margins of MESSE NAGOYA 2010.

Two days ago, more than 1,800 citizens including representatives of Parties joined the Naturathlon at the Moricoro Park, sending a strong message to your meeting today on the need to act urgently to stop and reverse the loss of biodiversity. At this occasion, famous Japanese champion Ms. Masaka Chiba, when asked by the Master of Ceremonies what advice she would like to share with the participants, she said, “If you wish to reach your goal, you must control your pace and sustain your efforts”. This advice also applies to your meeting today. This is the very objective of our host and the Japan biodiversity network for CBD to declare 2011 – 2020, the United Nations Decade of Biodiversity. This is your own Naturathlon.

The Aichi Nagoya Strategic Biodiversity Plan will need to be translated before the New Delhi Biodiversity Summit into national biodiversity strategies and action plans tailored to the needs and circumstances of the Parties and their partners. It will be also translated into action plans at the municipal level. This is the objective of the first-ever City Biodiversity Summit to be held at the end of this week. The expected 300 mayors from all over the world will have before them the Urban Biodiversity Index specially designed with the support of Singapore and test-bedded by 34 cities. Based on the experience gained by Aichi Prefecture and Ishikawa, prefectural strategies and action plans will be also promoted. Based on the experience of our host, biodiversity basic law will be encouraged. This is the objective of the summit on Parliamentarians and Biodiversity to be held in partnership with Globe International and Globe Japan with the participation as of today of more than 122 registered parliamentarians.

A proverb of our host country teaches us that “Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.” The 2011-2020 biodiversity Strategic Plan should be supported by means of implementation so as to avoid nightmares for our children. The multi-year plan of action on South-South cooperation adopted yesterday under the leadership of His Excellency Ambassador Alsaïdi, at the first G-77 forum on biodiversity for development and poverty alleviation is a major instrument at the service of the new biodiversity vision. The Aichi-Nagoya protocol on access and benefit-sharing to be adopted next week will enter history as the most important legal instrument at the service of sustainable development and the new Aichi-Nagoya biodiversity vision. To this end, let me convey to you Matsumoto San, our deep gratitude for the Japan initiative to support the Aichi Nagoya Compact.

Rikinosuke Ishikawa, an agricultural leader of Japan during the Meiji Era, taught us all of the importance of striving onward unflinchingly, without ever giving up, under any circumstance, until we achieve results. He said, “If you are going to dig a well, dig until the water bubbles forth.”

The new Strategic Plan cannot but succeed, and therefore monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential, including a mid-term evaluation in 2015 based on the fifth national report of Parties. Inspired by Grandma Cha Sa-soon, a 69-year-old South Korean woman who failed her driver's test, but never gave up and finally got her licence on her 960th try, we shall continue advocating a high-level event of the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, and this time with the full engagement and participation of Heads of State and Government.

Mr. Ishikawa also said, "Trust is the most difficult thing to gain. Progress is fostered in a nest built on solid bonds of trust." It is why we are gathered here in Japan. The Japanese character 和 (pronounced as "wa" in Japanese) means "harmony" but also means "Japanese". Indeed, Japanese people nurture a unique relation with nature. The Nagoya Festival Parade - Nagoya Matsuri, held yesterday at the occasion of the 400th anniversary of our host city, is a case in point.

When I first visited Japan in January 2007, three days after the decision of the Cabinet of Japan to host COP 10, I went to Hibaya Park located near the Ministry of the Environment. I learned from Noriko Moriwake, who for the past two years has been seconded from Japan to the CBD Secretariat in Montreal acting as Liaison Officer for COP 10, that Dr Seiroku Honda, the designer of Hibaya Park was surprised to learn that Kubi Kake (head staking) an old Ginkgo tree was to be felled due to road expansion. He approached the Chairman of the Municipal Council of Tokyo and informed him "I will have it transplanted even if my head is put on a stake". That was in 1899. Here in Aichi Prefecture, the Fujimae Tidal Flat story is a modern example of the unique relation of the Japanese people with their culture.

As the Honorary Ambassador of COP10 stated "our life and culture vary a lot and this diversity has been nurtured by the rich natural environments of different regions". Indeed there is a close relation between nature and culture and this is why a draft plan of action on biological diversity and cultural diversity prepared in partnership with UNESCO is before you. However the loss of biodiversity and cultural identity is distilling a culture of anxiety and in particular among our children.

In August this year, at the Aichi Conference on Youth, I promised the 10,000 children from 60 countries, that I would convey to you today their message of concern that you will respond to their anxiety and fear of the future. Last week, I was presented the name plate on the podium today, by Saki, to whom I promised, that I would spare no effort in raising and voicing the concern of her generation. She promised to receive the baton of the Naturathlon for protecting Life. Japan has its own way to handle fears and anxieties as well as Saki's concern.

The origami logo of our meeting reflects this unique relation. In May this year in Nairobi, I learned by listening to Mizuno San, the story of origami:

In Japan, we have traditional way to deal with anxiety. During our life time, people may experience unbearable sense of fear or keen sense of anxiety. Under such a situation of anxiety and sense of powerlessness, Japanese people have created certain object. It is Origami—paper craft characterizing animals or plants. For the specific purpose of sending strong wish, we have made origami of crane, white birds that may expectedly bring the feeling to the heaven or those undergoing hardship. Every paper we fold into the crane shape, we put our wish into the paper, and it is believed that when the number of crane increased to one thousand, the wish will be realized.

The head of Japanese delegation in Nairobi concluded that,

The use of origami as a logo for COP 10 translates our strong intention to materialize the wish toward the safe recovery of this planet.

Let me therefore pay tribute to Mr. Ryu Matsumoto, Minister of the Environment of Japan, for the outstanding leadership displayed by Japan, people and Government as the host of the Aichi-Nagoya Biodiversity Summit. Indeed, Prime Minister Naoto Kan has promised that “Japan shall exercise leadership to mobilize new actions” during our time in Nagoya. The Aichi-Nagoya COP 10 CBD Promotion Committee has demonstrated leadership.

Arigato Gozaimasu, Japan,

Arigato Gozaimasu Governor Masaaki Kanda and the people of Aichi Prefecture.

Arigato Gozaimasu Mayor Takashi Kawamura, and the people of Nagoya

Arigato Gozaimasu for the outstanding leadership and extraordinary hospitality, humility and kindness as the host of this historical meeting being held under the motto living in harmony into the future.

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Our host has displayed leadership. Now, it is your turn - the future of our children is in our hands. You may choose the “business as usual” scenario and spend countless hours in the budget committee to argue for a couple of dollars, yen, euro or one and a half percent increase or follow the wisdom of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who said that protecting biodiversity is not a cost but an investment. The choice is yours. But in doing so, remember the COP 10 song performed at the kick-off seminar of COP 10 here in this same Century Hall by children of Nagoya representing the 195 Parties of the United Nations, symbolising the universal United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, when they said and I quote:

Hey there everyone from many countries near and far, let's be thankful for life and how blessed we are, learning about nature's trouble to see what we can do. Welcome to COP 10 Aichi-Nagoya. This planet's full of diverse living things and we've got to keep them safe. Let us all join hands from many countries near and far. It's time to discuss how the world is all connected, let's all protect, nurture and connect to Mother Nature. Welcome to COP 10 Aichi-Nagoya.

Welcome to all of you to the Aichi-Nagoya Biodiversity Summit.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you all success.