



STATEMENT BY
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Engaging the business in the biodiversity agenda is of strategic importance. Your meeting today here in Rio de Janeiro reminds us of the leadership played by Brazil in engaging the business community in the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. It was indeed in Brazil, in Sao Paulo in 2005 that the elements of engagement of the business and biodiversity was conceived and it was also here in Brazil, that the eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2006 adopted the first decision on business and biodiversity.

Building on this decision, in 2009 a Brazilian project called “LIFE certification” was launched in Curitiba with the aim of both quantifying and officially recognizing actions by companies related to biodiversity conservation. We are therefore particularly gratified to have the LIFE Institute as a co-sponsor of today’s event.

Last year the Brazilian Movement of Companies for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity released a Letter for Biodiversity with the aim of further mobilizing the private sector in conservation efforts. The world owes its gratitude to Brazil for such leadership – leadership that, I am glad to say, continued last October at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit. During the ministerial segment of the meeting Isabella Texeira, Brazil’s Minister of Environment, delivered a call to action to the international community, stating:

“It is necessary to keep our vision on the future, so that our children and our grandchildren can, as ourselves, be the beneficiaries of nature's overwhelming wealth. This is what I call our ethical responsibility to the future generations.”

The international community responded to her call. In the closing hours of the conference, our 193 Parties and their partners adopted the Nagoya Biodiversity Compact, which comprises:

- A global biodiversity strategy for 2011-2020, known as the Aichi Targets;
- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising out of their Utilization;
- The Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; and
- The Strategy for Resource Mobilization in support of the three objectives of the Convention.

In addition, recognizing the importance of engaging the private sector in implementing Nagoya Compact, the Parties adopted key decisions that will concretely advance the mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services into business practices. Specifically, the Parties called for private sector engagement in:

- Establishing national and regional business and biodiversity initiatives;
- Compiling and disseminating information on best practices for mainstreaming ecosystem services;
- Encouraging the development and application of tools and mechanisms that can facilitate business integration of biodiversity conservation into their practices;
- Tracking the implementation of private sector progress in mainstreaming ecosystem services; and

- Supporting the Convention's objectives as well as national ecosystem services strategies.

All of these measures are deeply important. As you know, losing biodiversity brings substantial financial risks for businesses and the global economy. Indeed, the UN study on *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity* estimates the annual global cost of biodiversity loss at close to US\$ 3 trillion.

Moreover, preserving biodiversity also has the potential to create further business opportunities. Organic vegetables and fruits, certified timber, natural cosmetics, and eco-tourism are all examples of growth markets.

In addition, new markets and other mechanisms in development will enable companies to reduce the footprint of their activities on biodiversity. For example biodiversity offsets are conservation activities intended to compensate for the residual, unavoidable harm to biodiversity caused by economic development projects. Additionally, several certification schemes are being developed in a variety of sectors such as forestry and fisheries.

The importance of biodiversity to private sector growth is why, at COP-10, the Parties also called on the business community to participate in the revision of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans with the aim of translating the Nagoya outcomes into national policies and legislation. These revisions are expected to be completed by COP-11 in 2012 in Hyderabad. To this end, the Convention Secretariat, through the generous financial assistance from Japan, is currently carrying out a number of regional and sub-regional NBSAP workshops.

The signing and ratification of the Nagoya Protocol also holds much importance for the business community. The Protocol creates a framework that balances access to genetic resources on the basis of prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms with the fair and equitable sharing of benefits while taking into account the important role of traditional knowledge.

It also proposes the creation of a global multilateral mechanism that will operate in transboundary areas or situations where prior informed consent cannot be obtained.

Overall, the Protocol creates a level international playing field for business to incorporate biodiversity conservation into their business strategies without losing their competitive edge.

The Secretariat and the Global Environment Facility are therefore working to ensure that the first meeting of the Protocol's governing body takes place back-to-back with COP-11. To this end 50 ratifications are required before 19 July 2012.

Brazil was amongst the very first countries to sign the Protocol, and I hope it will continue to show leadership by becoming one of the first countries to ratify it.

Things are on the move when it comes to business and biodiversity. Let us therefore work together to make sure the successes of Nagoya are repeated a year from now in Hyderabad. COP-11 will include a high-level session on business and biodiversity that will bring together companies, business associations and policymakers from around the world to discuss good practices for conserving biodiversity.

Moreover, prior to COP-11, Keidanren and the Ministry of Environment Japan plan to host a meeting to launch a global platform on business and biodiversity.

I am sure the international community can count on the leadership of Brazil throughout this process and throughout this 2011-2020 United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. Indeed the President of Brazil, Her Excellency Dilma Rousseff, has stated:

“I consider that Brazil has a sacred mission to show the world that it is possible for a country to grow rapidly without destroying the environment.”

Rest assured that the Convention is here to support you in that mission – a mission that truly is sacred, and second to none today.

Thank you for your kind attention.