



STATEMENT BY
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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE PACIFIC REGIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

NADA, FIJI
3 OCTOBER 2011



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Life in harmony, into the future
いのちの共生を、未来へ
COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sadly, far too many people across the world remain apathetic to the ongoing loss of life on Earth. This is because the majority of the public and policymakers remain ignorant about the irreplaceable contributions that biodiversity makes to human wellbeing. As a result, biodiversity loss has not yet fully penetrated our collective consciousness.

Following the historic success of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit last October, the UN General Assembly therefore declared 2011-2020 the UN Decade on Biodiversity. The Decade is not only a vehicle to support the implementation of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. At the brink of ecological disaster, it is a worldwide celebration of everything we stand to lose by doing nothing and everything we stand to gain by changing our ways.

Over the course of the Decade, biodiversity must be mainstreamed throughout government and all sectors of society through communication, education and awareness-raising, appropriate incentive measures, and institutional change. By 2020, citizens and governments without exception should be firmly committed to the preservation of our biological heritage.

With this in mind, I would like to thank the Pacific Regional Environment Programme for organizing and hosting this event. Fiji is a fitting venue, given its significant levels of biodiversity. For example, the total number of known vascular plants in Fiji is approximately 2600. The fern flora in particular is highly developed with 303 taxa of which 29% are endemic species. Moreover, Fiji's fauna includes 55 terrestrial breeding bird species, of which 24 are endemic, and 15 species of breeding seabirds.

Fiji also provides some of the best examples of the value of protected areas. A report in 2007 showed that a locally-managed Marine Protected Area network in Fiji had tripled fish catches and increased local income by 35% over a three year period. In Navakavu Marine Protected Area, average monthly household income in January 2007 was more than double that of households outside of the protected area.

There should therefore be no doubt that these NBSAP and PoWPA capacity-building workshops are a crucial first step toward securing the long-term viability of the biological resources of the South Pacific. Many countries in this region have already gained substantial experience in developing and implementing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and the Programme of Work on Protected Areas. We now need to draw on this communal expertise, for time is of the essence.

To provide effective guidance on national implementation, new NBSAPs must be formulated as soon as possible. Any delay in accomplishing this task will augur poorly for the achievement of the Aichi Targets. In addition to revising NBSAPs, the signing and ratification of the Nagoya Protocol is an urgent topic. To ensure that the first meeting of the governing body of the Protocol will take place in India in October 2012 back-to-back with COP-11, 50 ratifications are required before 19 July 2012. Moreover, to reach consensus on funding targets at COP-11, progress must be made on such foundational issues as what constitutes biodiversity-related funding and the levels needed, particularly in relation to the Aichi Targets and the implementation of NBSAPs.

The task the international community set itself in Nagoya was ambitious. It will require leadership and creative thinking from the Parties, national focal points, the GEF and the Secretariat to ensure the timely delivery of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan at national and regional levels. But I have no doubt that the countries of the South Pacific can live up to the challenge of

Nagoya. I urge you to remember what is at stake in this process: nothing less than the future of life on Earth.

Thank you for your kind attention.