



## Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.  
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/10/26  
12 October 2010

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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### CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Tenth meeting  
Nagoya, Japan, 19-30 October 2010

### SUMMARY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HELD 22 SEPTEMBER 2010, AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY

*Note by the Executive Secretary*

#### Introduction

1. The General Assembly of the United Nations convened a high-level meeting on biodiversity on Wednesday, 22 September 2010, as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity. This note provides a brief report of the event. The President's summary of the meeting is appended. A more detailed report is provided in UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/35.1

#### Background

2. The high-level meeting was held in response to a request from the Conference of the Parties.<sup>2</sup> The General Assembly had encouraged all Member States to be represented at the highest possible level, including by Heads of State or Government and decided that the meeting would be structured around an opening plenary followed by thematic panels and would address in a balanced manner the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.<sup>3</sup> It further decided that the meeting would be chaired by the President of the General Assembly and requested the President to prepare a summary of the discussions for presentation at the closing plenary and transmission, under his authority, to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. On 9 September 2010, the General Assembly decided that the theme of the panels would be "The way forward in achieving the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the internationally agreed biodiversity goals and targets".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Further information is provided at <http://www.cbd.int/sp/sp2010p/unga.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Decision IX/33.

<sup>3</sup> Resolutions 63/219 of 25 February 2009, 64/203 of 14 December 2009 and 64/555 of 15 April 2010.

<sup>4</sup> A/64/L.70.

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### Opening plenary session

3. The opening plenary was presided by JOSEPH DEISS, incoming President of the General Assembly. He noted that biodiversity worldwide was declining through human action, adding that climate change was also contributing to the problem. The combined effects hampered efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals. He drew attention to the tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and expressed the hope that the day's discussions would provide a useful contribution to the negotiations there, in order to ensure that the new Strategic Plan to be adopted would be ambitious and feasible.

4. In his address to the high level meeting, BAN KI-MOON, Secretary-General of the United Nations, called for leadership from ministers of the environment, finance and planning, economic production and transport, health and social welfare, in order to bring to life the new Strategic Plan expected to be adopted at COP-10. "We must stop thinking of environmental protection as a cost", he said. "It is an investment that goes hand in hand with the other investments that you, as Heads of State and Government, must make to consolidate economic growth and human well-being in your countries." He urged all leaders present to commit to reducing biodiversity loss. "This will be your legacy", he said, "your gift to generations to come."

5. ABDULLAH M. ALSAIDI (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said the natural wealth of biodiversity was critical for developing countries and pointed out that those countries would not realize the Millennium Development Goals without addressing the international threats to biodiversity, in particular the misappropriation of genetic resources and "biopiracy". To that end, the adoption of the protocol on access and benefit sharing at the Nagoya meeting was of strategic importance. He said the Group was committed to finalizing the draft Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development and welcomed the First South-South Cooperation Forum on Biodiversity for Development, to be held in Nagoya on 17 October. "More than ever, the establishment of a global alliance for protecting life on Earth is required," he said. "This unique event offers us a unique opportunity as leaders of the world to provide leadership and lead by example for the benefit of life on Earth."

6. IZABELLA TEIXEIRA, Minister for the Environment of Brazil, recalling that her country had hosted the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2006, emphasized that the lasting success of conservation efforts would rest on the decisions to be made during the upcoming tenth meeting. In this regard, she highlighted the protocol on access and benefit-sharing, a new post-2010 plan and a new strategy for resource mobilization as three elements that must be considered and negotiated with urgency. Predictable, increased and sufficient resources and technology were needed to support national efforts to meet targets on biodiversity and to ensure country ownership. She stressed the need to "rescue the spirit of the Rio-92 Conference", which had led to the adoption of the Convention. "I call on all to renew that same sentiment of commitment, of political will, and of ethical-moral responsibility for the well-being of current and future generations. We need a deal in Nagoya."

7. NORBERT RÖTTGEN, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany emphasized that conserving biological diversity was not a luxury but necessary insurance, an investment in future and lives. He said that a signal should be sent on the need for a global pact on biodiversity, among other means by recognizing the value of biodiversity for human well-being and for the global economy, and by reducing the ecological footprint and restructuring production, trade and consumption. The financial foundations for tackling those and other challenges at the national and international levels must be significantly strengthened, he said.

8. SEIJI MAEHARA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, noted that Japan would host the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, in October with the aim of setting global targets up to 2020 and 2050 and reaching agreement on a new international regime covering access to and sharing of benefits relating to genetic resources as well as international rules on modified organisms. He said his country had proposed adopting a resolution on the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity during the current session to call for concerted action over the next 10 years throughout the United Nations system.

Japan would also propose the “Satoyama Initiative” in Nagoya, with a view to enabling the international sharing of experiences and practices developed in different regions of the world. Japan also intended to propose assistance measures to support developing countries in the formulation and implementation of national strategies. “Japan has long valued living in harmony with nature through the ingenious utilization of nature’s abundant gifts in our daily lives and activities,” he said. “As the Earth and humankind are in a crisis caused by the loss of biodiversity, we are urged to address the root cause by making our lifestyles and behaviour more harmonious with nature.”

9. JOSÉ MANUEL DURÃO BARROSO, President of the European Commission, speaking on behalf of the European Union, warned that the world was standing at a crossroads. “The new Strategic Plan must be sufficiently ambitious to force all Parties to the Convention to raise their game, to tackle the key drivers of biodiversity loss and to prevent ecological tipping points from being reached,” he said. He also emphasized the importance of concluding the negotiations on the protocol on access and benefit-sharing and to agree on how best to build capacity and mobilize scientific, technological, human and financial resources to enable all Parties to implement their commitments under the Convention. As part of its own 2020 biodiversity target, the European Union had committed to provide \$1 billion annually from 2002 to 2008, he said, in addition to significant contributions to replenish the Global Environment Facility.

### **Thematic Panels**

10. Heads of States and Government, Ministers and other high-ranking officials from 61 member states took part in the panel discussions. The first panel was co-chaired by Danilo Türk, President of Slovenia, and Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan. The second panel was co-chaired by María Fernanda Espinosa, Minister of Heritage of Ecuador, and Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development of Norway. Among the speakers, were the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and the Prime Minister of Samoa. A full list of the speakers is provided in UNEP/CBD/COP/10/INF/35.

### **Closing Remarks**

11. General Assembly President DEISS (Switzerland) summarized the day’s discussions and said the summary would be transmitted to the Tenth Conference of the Parties in Nagoya next month. The President’s summary is attached.

*Annex*  
**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON BIODIVERSITY**

**22 September 2010, New York**

**PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY**

Today, as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity, world leaders met for the first time for the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Biodiversity and reaffirmed the political will to reverse the alarming loss of biodiversity occurring throughout our planet.

I am very pleased to present to you a summary of today's meaningful discussions, which I will transmit to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10) to be held next month in Nagoya, Japan.

First, Member States and other participants emphasized the importance of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially in poverty eradication. They drew attention to the fact that continued biodiversity loss can have particularly adverse impact on the poor and other populations that depend on natural resources such as for fisheries and agriculture.

In order to protect biodiversity and its many services, including clean water, medicine and buffer against natural disasters, Member States and other participants noted that it is important to fully achieve the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In this regard, they attached great significance to securing successful outcomes at COP10. This meeting will address three inter-connected issues: access to and benefit-sharing of genetic resources; post-2010 strategic plan for biodiversity; and international support for the implementation of biodiversity strategies in developing countries. They recognised that progress on one would depend upon progress on the other two issues.

While noting the progress made to date for the negotiation of the draft Protocol on access to and benefit-sharing of genetic resources, Member States and other participants shared the concern that some issues are still outstanding. They called for a stronger political impetus and flexibility by all Parties in the negotiations to ensure the adoption of an effective Protocol at the Nagoya meeting.

COP10 presents an important opportunity to adopt a post-2010 strategic plan that contains ambitious, measurable and time-bound biodiversity targets for 2020. This plan would provide a common framework for action on biodiversity at the international, regional, national and local levels, and across various issues, from terrestrial and marine protected areas to combating of ocean acidification. In order to translate the strategic plan into concrete outcome, it needs to be integrated into national biodiversity targets and strategies. A United Nations Decade for Biodiversity as well as the multi-year plan of action for South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development would support the implementation of the new strategic plan.

Furthermore, noting the important linkage between scientific knowledge to effective policy-making, Member States and other participants stressed the importance of establishing an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and welcomed the progress achieved at the UNEP-facilitated intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting held in June 2010 in Busan, Republic of Korea.

The true economic values of biodiversity and the ecosystem services it underpins are now being identified to their full extent. Member States and other participants considered it important that such investigation continue as a matter of priority. They called for strengthening the biodiversity and economy nexus by incorporating the true values of biodiversity into economic theory, financial planning and investments in all sectors, as well as in policy and planning processes at all levels. Green economy, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and payments for ecosystem services were mentioned as important concepts and initiatives.

Member states and other participants also recognised that biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are an essential part of solution to the challenges of climate change. They noted that there are substantial benefits to be gained from the coherent implementation of the three Rio conventions as well as other biodiversity-related conventions. For example, initiatives for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) could provide co-benefits for biodiversity and local livelihoods. The upcoming Nagoya and Cancun meetings later this year and the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 provide timely opportunities to ensure that measures taken under the related Conventions are mutually supportive.

Recognizing that many countries lack the resources and capabilities to effectively implement their biodiversity strategies and commitments, Member States and participants called for bold action to ensure that these countries have access to financial resources and technology transfer. They also called for increased capacity building and scientific and technical cooperation.

In addition, Member States and other participants emphasized the need to mobilize civil society and the private sector. Indigenous and local communities and women and youth should be fully involved in the implementation of the new biodiversity strategic plan.

Finally, noting the Geneva Call for Action issued by the past and future presidencies of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Member States and participants noted that if current rates of biodiversity loss are not reversed, there will be drastic consequences for human societies.

They recognized the need for coordinated and urgent action across all sectors of government and society to address the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss. There is a need to reform our means of production, consumption and economic growth to ensure that we live within the ecological limits. Together, we can find ways to protect the “Mother Earth” and live in harmony with nature.

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