



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

STATEMENT BY

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE**

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE NINTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING
GROUP ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING**

**Cali, Colombia
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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,

The Kogis indigenous people from Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta gave the world this warning:

“The world doesn’t have to end; it could go on, but unless we stop violating the earth and nature, depleting the earth of its material energy, its organs, its vitality; unless people stop working against the earth, the world will not last”

This warning has a special significance today as the world is celebrating the World Water Day under the theme “Clean Water for a Healthy World”. One of the most culturally diverse aboriginal groups in Colombia, the Emberá, believes that the Genené tree once held all of the water of the world. In its trunk it preserved the seas; in its branches, the rivers; and in its sprouts, streams and marshes. This image while reflecting the intrinsic link between cultural diversity and biological diversity is a reminder of the urgency to translate the three objectives of the convention on life on earth into reality so as ensure that the world will continue to last. Addressing on 28 April 2008 the meeting of the Bundestag convened by Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on biodiversity, the guest of honour, the Vice-President Francesco Santos Calderón of Colombia, stated that we had to “see world problems through a green lens”. This is exactly what the next few days here are all about

We are all indebted and grateful to Colombia, its people and its Government, as well as to the local authorities of the City of Cali and the Valle del Cauca, for hosting this crucial meeting. In offering to host this meeting, the Government of Colombia has shown vision and commitment with respect to one of the greatest challenges of our time: the sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits deriving from the utilization of genetic resources.

It is also most fitting that we meet in Colombia, one of the world’s most biodiverse countries and the first country in Latin America to establish, in 1974, a Code on Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. Colombia’s cultural diversity mirrors its rich biological diversity. The many distinct indigenous communities, located primarily in the Amazonian and Andean regions, speak a total of 101 languages, of which 80 are spoken today as living languages.

More than 200 hundred years ago, Jose Celestino Mutis and his Colombian disciple Jose Francisco de Caldas discovered the existence of quinine-trees near Santa Fé de Bogotá. Their studies regarding the utilization of quinine bark, as Mutis itself recognized, were based in the indigenous traditional knowledge of fermentation of a popular beverage: the *chicha*. The discoveries of these two scientists began a wide-spread commerce of quinine towards Europe as a remedy against malaria fevers and other diseases. Cinchona, or quinine bark, is one of the Amazons most famous plants and a major contribution to the welfare of mankind.

For the Nasakiwe or Paez indigenous people, human beings and the Earth are so closely related that they call some parts of the human body as places of their geography and nature.

Biological diversity and cultural diversity are intimately linked: one depends on the other. Indigenous people have coexisted with their natural surroundings for thousands of years, and their lifestyles and livelihoods are intimately dependent on their habitat.

The protocol on access and benefit-sharing holds a huge potential for creating a new relationship with our most precious resource: our planet's genetic diversity. This is why we are gathered here in Cali. This is what the protocol on access and benefit-sharing is all about. Eight years after the Johannesburg commitment, four years after the Curitiba target, here we are in Cali to finalize the draft protocol on access and benefit sharing. Following 27 meetings of working groups, expert groups, regional meetings and informal consultations totalling 97 days of negotiations, the Co-Chairs Interregional Intersessional Consultations, the Nogales group, has fulfilled its mandate. I learned from Fernando Casas that Nogales is the name of a beautiful tree. The Nogales Group has indeed done a beautiful job! After 37 bilateral meetings and visits to all major capitals of the world, the two Co-Chairs, have fulfilled their mandate, and the Co-Chairs' non-paper draft protocol on access and benefit-sharing and the draft decision for the consideration of the Conference of Parties at its tenth meeting, as well as their revised guidance, are before you. Let me therefore congratulate the Nogales Group and pay tribute to the Co-Chairs for their leadership and for a job well done.

In the remaining seven days of our meeting, your committee consisting of 601 delegates will have the responsibility to deliver its mandate and submit the draft Protocol to be adopted in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in Japan 29 October 2010 this year.

The winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, the great Gabriel Garcia Marquez, once said:

"I believe it's not too late to build an utopia that allows us to share the earth. A new and sweeping utopia of life, where no one will be able to decide for others how they die, where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth"

I invite you to work together in the coming days to make Gabriel Garcia Marquez' "utopia" possible and to give to the children of the world their opportunity on Earth.

I urge all of you, Parties, Governments and stakeholders to rise to this historic challenge and to finalize draft protocol. In the words of the President of Namibia Hifikepunye Pohamba yours success will be the best gift for the celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity and a historic achievement for the international community as a whole. It gives me great pleasure to invite you to watch the message of the United Nations Secretary General.

Thank you for your attention.