



STATEMENT BY
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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

HELPING ISLANDS ADAPT
A WORKSHOP ON REGIONAL ACTION TO COMBAT INVASIVE
SPECIES ON ISLANDS TO PRESERVE BIODIVERSITY AND ADAPT TO
CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Island biodiversity is the legacy of a unique evolutionary history. These ecosystems are irreplaceable treasures. Island species are also unique in their vulnerability: of the 724 recorded animal extinctions in the last 400 years, about half were island species. Over the past century, island biodiversity has been subject to intense pressure from invasive alien species, habitat change and over-exploitation, and, increasingly, from climate change and pollution. This pressure is also keenly felt by island economies. Among the most vulnerable of the developing countries, small island developing States (SIDS) depend on the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity for their sustainable development.

This workshop is also unique in its wide coverage of island states and contributions made by the Parties, particularly the government of New Zealand, which generously offered to host and lead this important workshop. Our colleagues in New Zealand are the leaders in the creation of biosecurity systems which facilitate international trade, protecting the health of New Zealanders while ensuring the welfare of the environment, local flora and fauna, marine life and Maori resources. Working together with surrounding countries such as Australia and the Pacific Island States, I fully trust that the regional biodiversity strategy can encompass further safeguards of biodiversity and combat important threats to biodiversity, invasive alien species and climate change. The governments of Spain, Italy, Australia, France, Germany and the United Kingdom as well as the Nature Conservancy, the Global Island Partnership, the Global Invasives Species Programme, and the Pacific Invasives Initiative have also made contributions to the organisation of this workshop. They have also provided support to experts to join this excellent opportunity for regional and global collaboration between developing-country Parties in the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Coral Triangle, and the Caribbean. In addition, experts from Japan and the United States are taking part in this most welcome international collaboration.

As you are aware, 2010 is a special year for the community of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Parties to the Convention agreed in 2002 to the 2010 biodiversity target of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide by the year 2010. This was reaffirmed by Heads of States at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. However, the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, to be issued on 10 May 2010, will demonstrate, based on the over 110 national reports received by the Secretariat to-date, that the 2010 biodiversity target will not be met. The report clearly indicates that the persistence and intensification of environmental pressures, including invasive alien species, provide more evidence that the rate of biodiversity loss is not being significantly reduced.

This edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook will also show the way ahead for the post-2010 biodiversity target to be adopted in October this year in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, in Japan, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10). The proposed post-2010 target will be submitted to the Heads of State and government attending the high-level meeting on biodiversity of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly to be held in New York in September this year, and the Nagoya summit will subsequently adopt the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan of the Convention. Each Party will then translate the Strategic Plan and post-2010 target into their national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

The outcome of this workshop will provide precious information on the strategy of island states on safeguarding biodiversity to the fourteenth meeting of Subsidiary Body for Scientific Technical and Technological Advice, which will be held in next month in Nairobi, Kenya, and then report to COP10. Therefore, the workshop will strongly guide the international community as it decides how to take the next steps regarding regional implementation of biodiversity safeguards.

I learned of an old Maori proverb that says: "*Ma tini ma mano ka rapa te whai*"

By many, by thousands, the work (project) will be accomplished. Many hands make light work. Unity is strength.

And indeed, unity and a regional approach for combating invasive species and adapting to climate change is truly the strength of island states as they strive toward the sustainable use of biodiversity and sustainable development. Your participation and your action at this critical moment will make the goals of Convention on Biological Diversity achievable.

Thank you for your kind attention.