



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE PUBLIC LECTURE ON INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY
AND DEVELOPMENT

20 MAY 2010
NAIROBI, KENYA

Please check against delivery



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Life in harmony, into the future
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COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honor to be addressing you today at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre. Jomo Kenyatta, the founding father of this great nation, once said "You and I must work together to develop our country, to get education for our children, to have doctors, to build roads, to improve or provide all day-to-day essentials." During this 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, leaders across the world need to repeat that message, for we are faced with a crisis of historical proportions: because of biodiversity loss, our ability to secure our day-to-day essentials, and thereby ensure our health, wellbeing and long-term prosperity, is today under threat as never before.

We humans are increasingly destroying the great diversity of life on Earth, the vast array of biological resources that provides us with so much that we simply cannot live without.

300 million people worldwide, the majority poor, are estimated to depend substantially on forest biodiversity, including non-wood forest products, for their survival and livelihood. And yet about 13 million hectares of the world's forests are lost due to deforestation each year.

1 billion people depend on fish as their sole or main source of animal protein, while fish provided more than 2.6 billion people with at least 20 percent of their average per capita animal protein intake. And yet about half of marine stocks worldwide were fully exploited in 2005, while another one-quarter were overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion.

Coral reefs provide food and livelihood for most of the estimated 30 million small-scale fishers in the developing world. And yet 60 per cent of coral reefs could be lost by 2030 through fishing damage, pollution, disease, invasive alien species and coral bleaching.

Overall, it is estimated that natural capital constitutes 26 per cent of the total wealth of low-income countries. That is why at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, World Leaders agreed to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity Target of significantly slowing rates of biodiversity loss worldwide by 2010 as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. That is why the 2010 target was incorporated as a new target under the Millennium Development Goals and endorsed by the UN General Assembly. That is why 2010 was declared the International Year of Biodiversity and why this September, the 65th session of the UN General Assembly will devote an entire day to the problem of biodiversity loss and discuss the importance of biodiversity in sustainable development.

As Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland stated, 'You cannot tackle hunger, disease, and poverty unless you can also provide people with a healthy ecosystem in which their economies can grow.'

And yet despite the progress we have made in gathering political momentum, it has not yet made a difference on the ground. The recently-released third edition of the Convention on Biological Diversity's *Global Biodiversity Outlook* – a wide-ranging synthesis of the state of biodiversity today – shows that the nations of the world have individually and collectively failed to meet the 2010 Biodiversity Target. We continue to drive species extinct at up to 1,000 times the natural background rate.

Indeed the five main global drivers of biodiversity loss have not only remained more or less constant over the last decade, but are in some cases intensifying. These include habitat loss, the unsustainable use and overexploitation of resources, climate change, invasive alien species, and pollution. *Global Biodiversity Outlook 3* further warns that irreparable degradation may take place if ecosystems are pushed beyond certain tipping points, leading to the widespread and

irreversible loss of ecosystem services that we depend on greatly.

The conclusions of *Global Biodiversity Outlook 3* should serve as an international wake-up call because they are based not only on evidence from the scientific literature, but also on the over 110 fourth national reports that we at the Convention have received from our Parties. The continuing damage that we are inflicting on the planet's ecosystems and the negative consequences this has for humans is something that the countries of the world, almost across the board, are telling us in their own words.

That includes Kenya. To give a few examples from Kenya's fourth national report:

The nearly 53,000 hectare Kenyan mangrove system provide refuges and breeding sites for many coastal fish species and is also an important feeding ground. At the same time mangroves provide local communities with timber, tannin and other products, and are increasingly popular as a destination for ecotourism. However they are being rapidly degraded due to timber over-harvesting and conversion for salt farming.

Kenya's lakes have many species found nowhere else in the world and support a wide range of socio-economic activities, including rapidly growing fishing and tourist industries. For example the Lake Victoria basin hosts over 250 fish species, a large number of which are endemic, and also produces 90 per cent of Kenya's total catch and sustains nearly half of the country's population. Similarly Lake Naivasha, also rich in fish species, is a significant life support system for local communities who extract water and fish. However, in both Lake Naivasha and Victoria there is increasing pressure on fish resources due to overfishing and increasing pollution.

The report draws similar conclusions with regards to Kenyan wetlands, forests, and arid and sub-arid lands. Indeed when it comes to forest clearance, Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan environmental and political activist who in 2004 became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her role as founder of the Green Belt Movement, described the situation in clear-cut terms: "It's a matter of life and death for this country. The Kenyan forests are facing extinction and it is a man-made problem."

Overall, Kenya's fourth national report summarizes the situation as follows:

"Kenya's major ecosystems namely forests, wetlands, moist grasslands and arid/semi-arid land ecosystems still and will continue to harbor the country's key biodiversity habitats and need to be protected. [...] The government of Kenya recognizes that future sustained economic growth requires sound and equitable allocation of resources in management. However... most of these ecosystems especially wetlands and forests continue to be destroyed..."

My fellow speakers today will no doubt go into these issues in much more detail. The point I would like to make now is twofold. First, there is clearly a strong link between biodiversity preservation and sustainable development in Kenya. And second, the findings of Kenya's fourth national report echo those of other countries: while some progress has been made in preserving biodiversity, the overall situation remains deeply worrisome, with serious long-term consequences for human wellbeing.

Two factors make biodiversity loss particularly troubling for African countries. The first is widespread poverty. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's 2009 hunger report, 265 millions sub-Saharan Africans are already undernourished.

The second is the fact that Africa is a continent already under pressure from climate stresses and is therefore that much more vulnerable to further climate change. One-third of Africans already live in drought-prone areas and 220 million experience drought every year. Climate models suggest that such natural hazards are expected to become still more frequent and severe with global warming, resulting in increased water scarcity, decreased agricultural productivity, and a decline in major subsistence crops such as sorghum, maize and groundnuts. Indeed agriculture production in Africa accounts for 20 to 60 per cent of national GDP, and yet most of this production takes place in dry and sub-humid lands, almost half of which are vulnerable to desertification under changing climatic conditions.

Recognizing the link between biodiversity loss, climate change, hunger, poverty and hunger, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its partners are committed to tackling these problems synergistically. At the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2008 in Bonn, Germany, 20 out of the 37 decisions taken called on Parties and the Secretariat to address development and poverty issues through biodiversity initiatives. In particular, decision IX/25 on South-South cooperation highlights this as a powerful tool to enhance international cooperation for achieving sustainable development and in this era of rapid globalization. Indeed, the importance of cooperation between countries of the South in sharing their expertise and experiences cannot be overemphasized.

Also during COP9, a high-level panel was convened on Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation, which saw the official launching of the new Biodiversity for Development Initiative, established by the Secretariat with the support of the French and German Governments. Moreover, the German Government launched a major initiative to enhance the scope and management of protected areas. Entitled the *LifeWeb Initiative*, its aim is to match voluntary commitments for the designation of new protected areas and improved management of existing areas with commitments for dedicated financing. More specifically, the *LifeWeb Initiative* strives to provide funds to the Governments who are willing to protect more areas but do not have the financial means to do so.

Indeed the value of protected areas is multifaceted. In cooperation with the Friends of Protected Area Work Programme, at COP9 the Secretariat launched the report on “The Value of Nature: ecological, economic, cultural and social benefits of protected areas”. It provides concrete examples of how a robust biodiversity has helped to alleviate poverty to date and highlights how global efforts are making a difference.

To highlight examples from Africa:

- Here in Kenya, Kisite Marine National Park and Mpunguti Marine National Reserve provide nearly 29 tons of fish worth US \$34,000 to local populations.
- In South Africa’s Cape Region, pollination services of protected areas are worth approximately US\$ 400 million annually.
- Wetland and woodland products from the community-managed Mtanza-Msona Village Forest Reserve, adjacent to the Selous Game reserve in Tanzania, are worth almost eight times as much as all other sources of farm production and off-farm income of the poorest household in the village. The value of the wide range of wild foods harvested from wetlands is more than 14 times that of household’s average annual expenditures on food from market.

- In Zambia, the Barotse floodplain and wetlands complex provides products worth over \$12 million annually to 250,000 local people, and another \$40 million at regional levels.
- In Madagascar, Mantadia National Park provides \$126,700 per year in watershed protection and natural hazard mitigation.
- In Namibia, community-managed conservation has been shown to generate 547 full-time and 3,250 part-time jobs provided \$2.5 million in benefits from game-meat.

Similar statistics are to be found in the study “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity”, known as the TEEB report, which was also launched at COP9 in Bonn. The TEEB report offers a comprehensive synthesis of available information on the economic value of nature and a rationale for incorporating this value into our economics systems and markets. It will be submitted to the UN Biodiversity Summit this September in New York, as well as to the Convention’s tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties this October in Nagoya, Japan.

In Nagoya our 193 Parties – nearly every nation on Earth – will together finalize a 2020 biodiversity target and a 2050 biodiversity vision as a part of a comprehensive 2011-2020 strategic plan for stopping biodiversity loss in the future. They will also finalize an international regime on Access and Benefit-Sharing. The proceedings in Nagoya will also include the adoption of a multi-year plan of action on South-South Cooperation following discussions at the First Forum of the G77 and China on “Biodiversity for Development”. All of this will be done with the participation and input of a broad range of stakeholders, including youth, local and indigenous authorities, parliamentarians, cooperative agencies and the private sector.

We know now that biodiversity loss cannot be treated as a stand-alone issue, as it is interlinked with issues such as poverty, climate change, water scarcity, growth in demand, development and international conflict. That is why our new strategic plan will promote concerted and concrete action by all sectors of government and society. In order to achieve sustainable development, the preservation of our biological resources must be mainstreamed into society at large including, as I mentioned earlier, our economic systems and markets.

I urge you to do your part during this 2010 International Year of Biodiversity to help promote biodiversity preservation as integral to sustainable development and the fight against poverty. An excellent opportunity to do so will be two days from now on May 22nd, which is the International Day for Biological Diversity. This year’s theme is “Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation”, making it an excellent opportunity to raise your voices in support of life on Earth and of those who will suffer the most from its ongoing destruction.

Wangari Maathai said “You must not deal only with the symptoms. You have to get to the root causes by promoting environmental rehabilitation and empowering people to do things for themselves. What is done for the people without involving them cannot be sustained.”

The overall goal of the International Year of Biodiversity is to create momentum that can and will be sustained in the battle for life on Earth throughout the decades to come. Now is the time for a long-term commitment to life on Earth. Now is the time to address the loss of our biodiversity resources with the deep sense of urgency that the problem truly requires. As the slogan of the International Year reminds us: Biodiversity is life...biodiversity is OUR life.

Thank you for your kind attention.