



BRAZIL

Statement by H.E. Ms. Izabella Teixeira, Minister of the Environment, at the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity

New York, 22 September 2010

Your Excellency the President of the General Assembly, Your Excellency the Secretary-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In 2006, Brazil hosted the 8th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. For us, that initiative was steeped in political and symbolic meaning, given the enormous responsibility Brazil has towards biodiversity. As a Megadiverse country, Brazil is aware of the strategic value of biodiversity, and of the attention and urgency we should dedicate to it.

Most scientists, politicians, business people and the civil society understand the role of biodiversity as the basis for sustainability. For no other purpose did the General Assembly adopt a resolution declaring 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, and for no other reason we meet here today. This is definitely the time to transform our words and political discussions into action.

We should pave the way for a more sustainable society, since what we have at present is quite a disturbing picture: We have been unable to reduce the rate or the speed of the loss of biodiversity, as set out in the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Not only has there been an absence of relevant signs of reduction of biodiversity loss, but indicators portray a growing deterioration of biodiversity worldwide.

One of the key messages of the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is that, over the past century, certain economic sectors have benefited from the conversion of natural ecosystems and the exploitation of biodiversity. But these gains were achieved at the cost of increasing losses to biodiversity, degradation of ecosystem services and increase and spread of poverty.

We need strong and determined responses and political will to change this scenario - in particular in the run-up to the Rio+20 Conference. The conservation and sustainable use of biological resources are crucial not only to ensure continued benefits to local and indigenous communities, but also to create opportunities for sustainable development and poverty eradication for all.

Brazil is doing its part. According to the latest Global Biodiversity Outlook, Brazil was one of the few countries that contributed to clear up this picture. Under President Lula's leadership, Brazil has achieved significant results: we have created the greatest number of new protected areas in recent years, and we have managed to reduce to historical lows the deforestation rates. But much remains to be done.

I should highlight the important outcome we reached in South Korea for the establishment of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). By creating the adequate links between science, policymaking and capacity building through the provision of credible and relevant information on biodiversity and ecosystem services, IPBES will improve our understanding of the need for immediate action against the loss of biodiversity – as well as the consequences of inaction.

The lasting success of our efforts rests on decisions to be taken at the 10th Conference of the Parties of the CBD, in Nagoya. We have been negotiating a Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing which is fundamental to overcome the implementation deficit of the Convention and to combat biopiracy. We have been discussing a new Strategic Plan for the period post-2010, and a new Strategy for Resource Mobilization. A central part of our future efforts must include support for national agendas to reach targets on biodiversity, ensuring country ownership and supported by predictable, additional and sufficient resources and technology.

These three elements – the Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, the Strategic Plan and the new Strategy for Resource Mobilization – are part of an indivisible package for COP-10. They should be considered, discussed and negotiated with the attention and urgency that the matter deserves.

If there is one reason for discussing the issue of biodiversity in such a high level perspective, as we are doing here today, that should be to rescue the spirit of the Rio-92 Conference, that led us to significant results such as the adoption of the CBD. 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. At this High-Level Meeting, we should raise the profile of biodiversity and galvanize the political will and engagement of all countries in support of this call to action.

Thank you.