



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

STATEMENT

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**THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE 15TH IUAPPA WORLD CLEAN AIR CONGRESS
***ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN A RESOURCE
HUNGRY WORLD***

**12 SEPTEMBER 2010
VANCOUVER, CANADA**



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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,

This 2010 International Year of Biodiversity is an opportune moment to start building bridges between the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the IUAPPA. The IUAPPA has a long history of excellent work on topics such as climate change and nitrogen and other air-borne pollutants – issues that the CBD and its partners are increasingly seeking to address in our fight to save the diversity of life on Earth.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment identified pollution is one of the five main drivers of biodiversity loss. For example, the number of observed “dead zones” – coastal sea areas where water oxygen levels have dropped too low to support most marine life – has roughly doubled each decade since the 1960s with now over 500 worldwide. Many are concentrated near the estuaries of major rivers, and result from the buildup of nutrients, largely carried from inland agricultural areas where fertilizers are washed into watercourses. The nutrients promote the growth of algae that die and decompose on the seabed, depleting the water of oxygen and threatening fisheries, livelihoods and tourism.

Climate change is another the main driver of biodiversity, and is projected to become progressively more important over the coming decades. At the Copenhagen Climate Conference last December, the CBD’s Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Climate Change and Biodiversity released a major report which shows that observed changes in climate have already adversely affected biodiversity at the species and ecosystem level, with further changes in biodiversity being inevitable with further changes in climate. Approximately 10 per cent of species assessed so far have an increasingly high risk of extinction for every 1°C rise in global mean surface temperature, a trend that is expected to hold true up to at least a 5°C increase.

Fortunately there is also cause for optimism. Pollution reduction efforts are among the most encouraging environmental success stories worldwide, showing the effectiveness of policies, particularly with regard to improved water quality and the recovery of the ozone layer. For example, recent monitoring of inland water bodies within the European Union suggests that nitrate and phosphate levels are declining, partly as a result of the EU’s Nitrates Directive, which is helping with the ecological recovery of some rivers.

Moreover, ecosystems can play a significant role in mitigating climate change through enhanced carbon sequestration and storage. Land management practices that can effectively contribute to mitigation include the protection of carbon stocks found in natural forests and peatlands; the sustainable use of forests and tropical zones; the restoration of degraded tropical zones; and sustainable agricultural techniques, for example preserving ground cover and thereby preventing soil erosion. Overall, the potential for sustainable land management practices to reduce emissions and increase sequestration of carbon is estimated at between 1 to 6 billion tons of CO₂ per year.

Ecosystems are also well known for the air and water purification services they provide, and therefore can play a more general role in abating pollution. Overall, policies that reduce pollution are beneficial to biodiversity, while policies that seek to conserve biodiversity help to combat pollution. A partnership between the CBD and the IUAPPA therefore makes eminent sense.

It is also something we need to pursue with some urgency. In May the Secretariat released the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3). Based on 120 national reports of Parties to the Convention and the scientific literature, GBO-3 shows that species worldwide

continue to disappear at up to 1,000 times the natural background rate. It warns that without concerted action massive further loss of biodiversity is projected to occur before the end of the century with ecosystems approaching tipping points beyond which they will be irreversibly degraded.

That is why the Convention's upcoming 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-10) in Nagoya, Japan, will seek to establish a global alliance for life on Earth. COP-10 is expected to adopt a new strategic plan on biodiversity for 2011-2020, including a set of 2020 targets and a 2050 biodiversity vision. This will be done with the participation of all stakeholders, including youth, local and indigenous authorities, parliamentarians, development cooperation agencies and the private sector.

The new strategic plan will address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, such as a lack of public awareness and the failure of development policies to incorporate the economic values of biodiversity. Needless to say, getting to the root causes of biodiversity loss also takes us toward the root causes of pollution, meaning that this new strategic plan stands to benefit the IUAPPA community. Moreover, the IUAPPA's monitoring ability could help with the implementation of the strategic plan by contributing to the monitoring of biodiversity impacts, modelling and policy development.

With so much to gain on both sides, I very much hope we can collaborate in the future and wish you best of luck with the Conference.

Thank you.