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Statement by:

H.E. Mrs. Fatemeh Bodaghi

Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Legal Affairs

Before

**the High-Level Meeting as a Contribution to the International
Year of Biodiversity**

Wednesday, 22 September 2010

United Nations, New York

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**Co-chairs,
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset I would like to express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting. This meeting is taking place at a critical time when the international community is facing serious environmental challenges that could adversely affect timely achievement of internationally agreed development goals, especially in developing countries.

Co-chairs,

Let me begin my remark by highlighting the message of the Holy Koran about nature; Koran introduces nature as a blessing of God, to be exploited wisely and to be preserved and protected. There are many verses in the Holy Koran that emphasize the importance of nature and the wise use of resources. The necessity of being and the right to existence of all God's creatures is emphasized times and again in the Islamic precepts. The importance of preserving nature is admitted in all religions and schools of thoughts. The Islamic republic of Iran benefits from such valuable Islamic teachings and a system of values for conservation of nature and its components.

Co-chairs,

In 2002, more than hundred Heads of State and Government in Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development agreed to reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth by 2010. In spite of significant progress achieved, there are many indices of biodiversity that the world has failed to meet the 2010 targets.

Convening this meeting as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity should provide an opportunity to bring to light the challenges that international community faced during past decade. The output of this meeting should help us to find out most effective ways of reversing the loss of biodiversity resources across the globe. Biodiversity and climate change are crucial to the alleviation of poverty, due to the basic goods and ecosystem services it provides. It is integral to key development sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism, which more than 1.3 billion people depend on for their livelihoods.

Co-chairs,

The Islamic Republic of Iran regards biological diversity as a basis for its sustainable development, and the country's biological resources are described in terms of aquatic resources, coastal areas, agricultural activities, forests and rangelands, and the wetlands. This makes the biodiversity a direct source of food, fuel and medicines. The core benefits of agriculture and

natural resources are attributed to the wide range of ecosystem goods and services derived from biodiversity at different levels, including genetic, species, and ecosystem levels.

In order to meet the goals and targets of 2010 and reduce the rate of biodiversity loss at the national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation, the Islamic Republic of Iran has undertaken a number of projects to halt the degradation of major ecosystems and initiate conservation efforts such as integrated fertilizer management projects, irrigation and inland water management, coastal management projects, coastal and wetland biodiversity management projects, and implementation of afforestation projects.

In relation to tourism and cultural activities, several projects are underway for developing and promoting eco-tourism through protecting and supporting culture and traditions of the local communities. We have provided local communities with programs to promote conservation and sustainable use of biological and genetic resources.

Areas protected by the Government cover 12 million hectares (about 8% of the land area). Our goal is to increase this proportion to 10% of the national land area. We have also established a national target of preserving 10% of forest areas to be conserved as protected areas.

Co-chairs,

We will come together in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, to evaluate progress goals and targets in past 8 years and agree on new biodiversity targets for the future. The new plan in Nagoya should include the establishment of a long-term programme and a roadmap beyond 2020 to maintain and restore biodiversity. It should also provide additional and sufficient financial resources and the transfer of related technology to developing countries.

In conclusion, Co-chairs, today, the biodiversity loss and climate change are among the main concerns for the international community. In the absence of strong political commitment followed by effective actions by all stakeholders, these challenges could prevent us from the timely achievement of the biodiversity targets, in particular in the least developed countries. Obviously, we could not remain indifferent to the situation of such a dire nature. Overcoming these obstacles requires collective will, vigorous cooperation, and effective implementation of the major global agreements on biodiversity.

I thank you