

27 October 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the High-level Segment of the 10th Conference of the
Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10)**

Mr. Prime Minister,
Excellencies,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address you this morning at the Opening of the High-level Segment of the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This is my fifth visit to Japan and each time I am here, I am inspired by the hospitality and the nature-friendliness of the country. With its many innovative environmental initiatives and commitment to multilateral cooperation, suffice it to mention here the Kyoto Protocol, Japan provides an excellent backdrop for this year's Conference of the Parties.

Biodiversity has always been essential to the existence of humankind. From the very beginning, we have been dependent on the generosity of nature to provide for our physical and spiritual needs. But, today, biodiversity is being lost throughout the world, largely as a result of the actions of human beings.

When biodiversity loss occurs, it is not only polar bears in the Arctic and plants in the Amazon that disappear, however sad that is. It is the very foundation of human life that becomes threatened because the whole ecosystem is closely interconnected.

While we are all threatened by the loss of biodiversity, the consequences are even more serious for the poorest among us. Many biodiversity-rich areas are in developing countries whose people are particularly dependent on agriculture, fishing and forestry for their subsistence.

It is therefore important that we dedicate to biodiversity the urgent priority and concerted action that it deserves. My hope is that our meeting in Nagoya can help make real progress on this pressing issue.

Last month, Environment Ministers and other stakeholders from across the world convened in New York for a High-level meeting of the General Assembly on Biodiversity. Together, they demonstrated strong political will to safeguard biodiversity. They further stressed how critical biodiversity is for our efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They emphasized how severe the consequences of biodiversity loss are for the poorest in developing countries.

While the full text of my summary of the High-level meeting is available for your reference, I would like to highlight several points that were reiterated during the meeting.

First, Member States voiced high expectations for COP10 to adopt a Strategic Plan that contains ambitious, realistic and measurable biodiversity targets for the coming decade. They also called for the adoption of an effective protocol on access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources and timely establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

In particular, many references were made to the importance of incorporating the true economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services into a broad range of economic and financial activities and policymaking processes.

Second, Member States emphasized the need for a holistic approach to biodiversity and other environmental challenges such as climate change and desertification.

For example, initiatives for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) could provide co-benefits for biodiversity and local livelihoods.

Third, developing countries are often rich in terms of biodiversity. It is important that they be able to benefit from these resources and use them in a sustainable manner.

Member States drew attention to the importance of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building in implementing national biodiversity commitments and strategies. They called for South-South and triangular cooperation and urged the whole society, in particular the private sector, youth and indigenous communities to actively contribute to biodiversity efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. It is my hope that COP10 will bring an additional reason to celebrate the Year by adopting a Strategic Plan that would successfully guide national, regional and international efforts towards meaningful protection and sustainable use of biodiversity. This is key to ensuring the health, prosperity and security of present and future generations. Preserving biodiversity is not a luxury; it is a duty.

I wish you success in this Conference.