

11 May 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Signature Ceremony Event for the Nagoya Protocol to the
Convention on Biological Diversity**

Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Preserving biodiversity is not a luxury, it is a duty.

This ceremony brings us a step closer to the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol and the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol. I am pleased to see that many States Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are here today to sign these two important protocols.

Last year, the international community celebrated the International Year of Biodiversity. As a contribution to the year, the General Assembly convened a High-level meeting on biodiversity in September. On this occasion, we reaffirmed our strong political commitment to reversing the alarming loss of biodiversity occurring in all parts of the world.

Unless we take resolute and concerted action, ecosystems will continue to deteriorate and our lives and livelihoods will increasingly come under threat from dwindling habitats, rising food and resource scarcities and frequent natural disasters. The impacts of climate change are further compounding these risks.

This call for action and for the adoption of a 10-year Strategic Plan by the Conference of the Parties clearly came out of our High-level meeting. This is the message that I conveyed to the Heads of State and Government and delegates who gathered in Nagoya last October for the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It is very encouraging for the future of our planet that in Nagoya after long hours, coming after already long years of difficult negotiations, delegates finally agreed on adopting the Nagoya Protocol. The Protocol sets out rules and procedures for implementing the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources. The provisions of the Protocol relating to access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, which are held by indigenous and local communities are particularly important and timely to support our efforts for sustainable development. This is a very important outcome.

I join you all today in welcoming this historic Protocol. I hope that it will take effect as early as possible through the ratification by at least fifty Parties to the Convention. Our efforts do not end here.

We must keep the positive momentum of Nagoya into the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in India and into Rio+20 so that our generation can be remembered for the wisdom of protecting biodiversity, the very basis for the well-being for our posterity.

Thank you.