



**High-level segment at COP 10
of the Convention on Biological Diversity
Nagoya, Japan, 28 October 2010**

**Statement by Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Today we stand at a crossroads reminiscent of a previous test of our resolve.

In 1992 the community of nations could have walked away from the challenge of laying the international policy foundation for global sustainability, but instead governments came together in collective wisdom to produce the three Rio Conventions. We know the facts:

- Biodiversity is the rock on which we have built our civilisations and economies.
- Climate change is the hammer which is already threatening this foundation, warning us of worse consequences if we do not act more rapidly.
- And desertification is the flashing red light that points to the inhospitable future many are destined for, if we fail.

As member States of the United Nations, you gave the three conventions different mandates, and have expected different fields of expertise. But we are “joined at the hip” by the one imperative that is the most compelling of all: global sustainability.

We are all striving for the global compacts that are so urgently needed to increase real action on the ground. This week here in Nagoya you are grappling with how to conserve, finance and provide access to biodiversity. In a few short weeks in Cancun, your same governments can produce climate change agreements to put in place the commitments and actions, as well as the

institutions and funds, that can spur action on adaptation and mitigation, enabled by capacity-building, technology and finance.

But governments must now strive harder to blend these actions at the national level into coordinated and effective solutions to reach sustainability. Let me illustrate by stating two obvious examples: First, national actions to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation further both the climate and the biodiversity agendas, and prevent desertification. And second, most ecosystem-based adaptation measures both improve climate resilience and protect biodiversity levels.

Global goals and national efforts to address climate change, protect biodiversity and combat desertification must move ahead together if we are to meet the demands of a truly sustainable future.

In 1992 the community of nations laid the theoretical foundation for global sustainability. Today, the same nations face the challenge of finding common ground on how to move from theory to practice. And how to not only advance, but accelerate the path toward sustainability.

May your deliberations here and in Cancun be guided by the beacon of the common good and the urgency of action.

Thank you.

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