

Your Excellencies,

I am honored today to have the opportunity to address you on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and to offer some thoughts on the broad issues that have been facing this historic Conference of the Parties.

There is a now broad recognition, at the international level, that if we continue to consider biodiversity as a sectoral concern, divorced from wider societal aspirations and goals, then we will continue to set targets to curb biodiversity loss, that we will continue to fail to achieve. To transform past failure into future success, we must accept that biodiversity does not stand, nor fall, alone. Ecosystems and social systems, nature and culture ... those things that we once thought were divided, and even opposed, must now be reflected upon, and acted upon, as one. UNESCO, with its broad mandate that brings together natural sciences, social sciences, culture, education and communication, strives to bring this all-embracing vision to the multiple and complex challenges before us.

In this regard, this tenth Conference of the Parties has opened the way towards a more comprehensive approach by endorsing a CBD and UNESCO programme of work on synergies between biological and cultural diversities. Reinforcing our understanding of how biodiversity is upheld and even enhanced by cultural diversity, ... and how cultural diversity is anchored in biological diversity, are significant objectives that UNESCO looks forward to pursuing in tandem with the CBD.

Indeed, UNESCO is committed to combating the erosion and loss of diversity in all of its manifestations - diversity of cultures, languages, local and indigenous knowledge systems, as well as biological diversity. All these forms of diversity are inter-connected and interdependent. By maintaining diversities, we reinforce the resilience of the socio-ecological systems that we all depend upon, and it is through resilience that societies weather crises, whether they may be environmental or financial.

As we all know, science, technology and innovation are essential building blocks for sustainable development and human well-being. STI policies that take biodiversity fully into account will strengthen economies and combat poverty, while guaranteeing conservation and sustainable use. UNESCO is committed to continuing to work with other partners to strengthen the scientific bases of our understanding of biodiversity. But we must not forget that profound knowledge of biodiversity and the benefits that it can bring to society is not the exclusive domain of our formal

scientific communities. Indigenous peoples and local communities know, conserve and use sustainably the landscapes and seascapes of their territories. Bringing recognition to the stewardship role of indigenous peoples, with respect to both biological and cultural diversity, and ensuring that they share equitably in associated benefits, is a goal that is consistent with the broad mandate of UNESCO.

This bridging between scales, from the international to the local, is essential for the achievement of the post 2010 agenda. UNESCO can facilitate the implementation of inter-linked decisions at all of these different levels through its global networks of localized sites, in the form of World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves, and through our close relationships with our member states.

But UNESCO is concerned not only with knowledge creation and mobilization, but also with knowledge transmission and the transformative power of knowledge. With its lead role for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO continues to promote biodiversity education and awareness-raising. We see huge potential in increasing the roles of students themselves in gathering meaningful data and understanding to promote our collective scientific agenda.

UNESCO would like to make available its convening power in the areas of science, education and culture to all those who would like to work together in creating synergies in these areas, so as to promote biodiversity and cultural diversity. UNESCO addresses this invitation to the biodiversity constituency as a whole: Governments, Small Island Developing States, megadiverse countries, the scientific community, indigenous peoples and civil society.

UNESCO also looks forward to working with the CBD SBSTTA on scientific, technical and technological issues that need elucidation so as to pursue the biodiversity agenda.

I take this opportunity to recognize the important efforts being made by all Parties to the Convention, of which UNESCO is a long-standing partner, and to pay tribute to the critical role and leadership of the Government of Japan.

Thank you.