



**Naoko Ishii**

**Statement**

**High Level Opening Session**

**CBD COP-12**

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Honorable Minister, Members of the head table, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here.

The Global Biodiversity Outlook-4 presents a sobering picture on the state of biodiversity and ecosystem services. It shows that the world's ecosystems are being pushed beyond their carrying capacity, and that we need urgent, transformational change if we are to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Target.

As emphasized in GBO-4, it is critical that we not only focus on investing in the right places, but also focus our investments on addressing the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss.

It is encouraging that our experiences during GEF-5 indicate that such a shift is already beginning at the country level. In GEF-5, we have seen a significant shift in programming priorities with more resources than ever being invested in biodiversity mainstreaming.

I am also pleased that the GEF biodiversity program continues to show high implementation quality: Of the nearly 200 GEF biodiversity projects that are currently under implementation, 91% are on track to achieve their global environment objectives according to independent evaluations. This is a performance that should be widely acknowledged, and I commend in particular the parties to the CBD for this significant result.



I would also like to report that we have seen an increase in the demand for support to capacity building for access and benefit sharing and the development of ABS agreements. This is particularly timely with the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol, another significant achievement we can celebrate at this COP. I am proud of the support the GEF has provided to this achievement in the past, and am looking forward to continue working with parties on this agenda in the future.

Looking ahead, the successful GEF-6 replenishment process provides us with a strong basis for further action. 31 countries pledged a total of \$4.4 billion towards programming in GEF-6 and \$1.3 billion was allocated to the biodiversity focal area. Biodiversity is now the single largest focal area in the GEF. Furthermore, resources from other focal areas that contribute to the Aichi Targets in the replenishment will make total investment over the next four years reach \$1.8 billion. I believe the replenishment outcome represents a real vote of confidence in the financial mechanism of the CBD.

But we all know that money alone is not going to be enough. Transformative change will only come when biodiversity is fully integrated into sustainable development. The focus of this COP could therefore not have been better chosen, and I am very grateful for the vision of our host country to bring this topic to the forefront of our discussions during the COP.

We need to take biodiversity out of the environment ghetto and make it the basis of green economies. Biodiversity must become central to development decision-making and financial planning, for both the public and private sectors.

At the urging of our partner countries the GEF's new (biodiversity) strategy puts a strong emphasis on helping countries address some of the most critical underlying drivers of biodiversity loss, including the failure to account for and price the full economic value of ecosystems, and to integrate this accounting of natural capital into all financial planning and development decision-making.

GEF-6 also introduces a series of pilot approaches that directly target critical drivers of environmental degradation globally through large integrated investment programs. In the case of biodiversity, perhaps the most important is the Integrated Approach Program to take deforestation out of the supply chain of global



commodity production for those products with the largest environmental footprints in some of the world's most important areas for biodiversity. Likewise, GEF's International Waters strategy also contributes resources to the Aichi Targets. It focuses on removing barriers to sustainable management of marine resources by bringing together government, industry, research institutions and fishermen communities.

We have achieved a lot together over the years. But we must have the courage to admit that without confronting the difficult challenge of tackling the drivers of biodiversity loss we will fail. Transformational change is needed. We look forward to supporting a new generation of biodiversity investments that match the scope of the problem and the aspirations in the CBD Strategic Plan. For that, we commit to work together with the CBD, donors and recipient countries, GEF agencies, and civil society towards the joint achievement of the Aichi Targets and to realize, in practical on-the-ground terms, the full integration of biodiversity into sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention.