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IIFB Opening Statement

International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity would like to thank the Republic of Korea for their hospitality in allowing us to speak on their lands, and you, Mr Chair for this opportunity to address the members of the Conference of Parties.

We will hand in most of our comments to be reflected in the record, and will introduce our recommendations to the COP in detail in the appropriate Working Group sessions. We would like to now indicate some of the priority issues we will address in this session.

1. Terminology on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: The IIFB is pleased to see a draft decision changing the outdated terminology “indigenous and local communities” to the more legally correct term “indigenous peoples and local communities” that we have consistently demanded. We agree that the Convention should not be reopened for negotiation on terminology. However, with the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 and numerous other related developments, the CBD should use “indigenous peoples and local communities” in its future decisions and secondary documents in order to clarify and interpret the terms used in Article 8(j) of the CBD.

2. Safeguards: We appreciate the increasing recognition of the role of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices in all relevant programs of work. We particularly welcome initiatives that promote partnerships between indigenous peoples and local communities and others, such as in collaborations with scientists in exchanges of knowledge. However, where-ever these are discussed, there need to be durable safeguards that effectively protect our rights to our genetic resources, biodiversity, traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. Guidelines need to be developed, with our full and effective participation, for free, prior and informed consent. These should include a balanced assessment of

both potential risks and benefits involved in programs, activities and knowledge exchanges. Mechanisms such as safeguard information systems being developed under REDD+ schemes should be put into place to monitor compliance.

3. Biopiracy and Synthetic Biology: Biopiracy of indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and genetic resources continues. The Nagoya Protocol and tasks 7, 10 and 12 of the Article 8(j) Working Group seek to solve this, but biopiracy cannot be effectively addressed without recognition of indigenous peoples' customary laws as part of a strong compliance regime, and full respect for the right to give or withhold consent. Synthetic biology, a new and emerging issue, exponentially increases the risk of biopiracy and has largely unknown environmental, social, cultural, and health impacts. We support a precautionary approach and call for a ban on the use of synthetic biology and any releases of its products.

4. Participation, women, and youth: We are thankful for continual improvement in the recognition of indigenous peoples' and local communities' participation in the CBD. We wish to work with parties to improve this throughout the text, and include a standard reference to our participation where it has been omitted, such as in Item 27 on the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity. We also look for standard reference to the role of women and youth where-ever it is appropriate, and measures to enhance their participation in the development and implementation of COP decisions.

5. Financing: We have a continuing concern with financing our participation in the development and implementation of programs of work. Our lands, waters and territories are necessary for the achievement of the Aichi Targets and the aims of the Convention. This will not be achieved without sufficient financing for our full and

effective participation at all levels, and in all stages of decision making, development, planning, implementation, management. Financing mechanisms should take women and youth into special consideration and ensure their participation.

6. Traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples are based on sustainable use of biodiversity, therefore indi-

genous peoples and traditional knowledge should be seen as valuable assets for integrating biodiversity to the post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda and the sustainable development goals. IIFB encourages to support the development of traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples, in order to support sustainable development and reduce poverty.

Agenda item 14 – Resource Mobilisation

Incentives for subsidy reform

Japan Wildlife Conservation Society Aichi Target3 committee

We are in danger of missing Aichi Target 3. In 2013, the CBD Secretariat called for information from Parties on obstacles to the reform of subsidies and incentives, but only 13 countries and 2 organizations submitted reports (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/11).

What incentives are needed for the Parties who are slow to reform? We have been studying the effects of subsidies and other incentives. From that research, we concentrated on two incentives for reform

One effective incentive is to **tie trading regulations to the Aichi Targets**. Trade is closely linked to the promotion of domestic industry. But the promotion of domestic industry has its weak points when viewed from an environmental perspective. For this reason it is necessary to take a look at the reform of subsidies intended to preserve biodiversity through trade from the point of view of a global ecosystem. Rather than put one's own country at a trade disadvantage through reform of subsidies, it is better to reform the system so that it will benefit.

The second point is that reform is needed to **strengthen local organizations and regional governments** to put them on an equal footing with central government in the use of subsidies for the solution of local problems.

In Japan, the population is declining, particularly in rural districts. With the rising number of communities with a high proportion of elderly people, some of these local communities may one day disappear.

With such a situation in mind, several local governments have recognized the value of their natural environment and have switched to plans that focus on the value of their ecosystem services. Already there is a trend for young people who support such plans to move from the city to the countryside. With numerous plans being integrated, and increasing participation of interested parties, local governments are leading the way. How national subsidies can best be used, is up to the local governments who are in contact with the rural districts, and we can expect these changes in direction and other improvements to become an incentive for subsidy reform.

To solve the problem of eliminating poverty and other local problems that the world is facing will require a variety of subsidy reforms as desired by Japan and other countries, and which will be greatly assisted by the attainment of Aichi target 3.

Many of these points have been included in the COP12 draft. Our first step must be to make sure that the draft is approved without any backsliding. The next step will be for a variety of sectors to develop the decisions into positive actions that will achieve Aichi Target 3.

<http://www.jwcs.org/english/Biodiversity.html>

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Submissions are welcome from all civil society groups.

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Side event

Advancements and reflections on fulfilling National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

Tuesday, 7 October, 18.15-19.30

Hall D, Room 3,

organized by CBD Alliance

The World is not on track to stop the loss of biodiversity

Opening statement by Civil Society Organisations – CBD Alliance

We fully support the statement of the IIFB, including the proposal to use international accepted terminology like indigenous peoples.

The CBD Alliance is deeply concerned to note the world is not on track to control the loss of biodiversity. And we cannot but notice that this Convention is not even implementing its own decisions. Worse still, in several cases, after good decisions are taken, issues seem to disappear from national and international agendas. Such is the case for **agriculture, biofuels, and forests**. The review of the implementation of these work programs and decisions should be standing items on the agenda of CBD COPs.

Agricultural biodiversity shows the beautiful result of the long relationship between indigenous peoples, local communities and farmers with biodiversity. We need to bring the focus back to traditional and small-holder agriculture, the rights of peasants and pastoralists, the seed diversity and knowledge that is controlled by them, and the CBD should be at the heart of this vital work. Recognising and supporting the customary rights, governance mechanisms and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, peasants, fisherfolks, including ICCAs (Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Territories and Areas), is a powerful way of implementing the Strategic Plan.

Corporate-driven and often risky technologies will not provide solutions for global environmental problems. Instead, we should act to prevent damage to biodiversity wherever we can. That is precisely why the Precautionary Principle is at the heart of this Convention. The unwillingness of some Parties to take it serious is therefore tremendously worrying.

Specifically, a precautionary approach should be applied to **synthetic biology**, which will have grave impacts on biodiversity and traditional livelihoods in many developing countries, whose natural products would be replaced by the products of synthetic biology. It is already expanding globally, without any global or national public oversight or regulation, without capacity to perform adequate risk assessments, without consultation or information to affected peoples and countries.

Parties therefore must *not* approve the commercial, non-commercial or environmental release of synthetic biology derived organisms, compounds and products.

Marine and coastal biological diversity is greatly endangered, despite being a long enduring priority program in the CBD. Issues such as the impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity of anthropogenic underwater noise and ocean acidification, and the destruction of coral reefs must be addressed urgently. In the discussion on EBSAs, forthcoming decisions must be consistent with earlier CBD commitments to promote the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, as well as to respect, preserve and maintain their governance systems, their knowledge, innovations and practices.

Implementation is the priority. A Pyeongchang Roadmap to ensure it would be welcome, if it reflects all Aichi Targets equally, and does not substitute them, nor renegotiate the Strategic Plan. Biodiversity protection must be a fundamental part of the new sustainable development goals, and be recognised in integrated targets as part of economic and social goals.

We would also like to warn against growing **conflicts of interest** within the Convention: implementation needs more funds at all levels: currently funding for delegates is decreasing, the secretariat is underfunded, and protection of biodiversity is not assigned a decent budget within the countries. Instead private funding is offered. We wonder what this implies: when delegates are sponsored by business to come here: will they speak freely? When the secretariat needs to organize workshops, will private funding define the agenda? When biodiversity is under threat in a country, will companies be able to offset their involvement in destroying it? We urge the CBD Secretariat and Parties to fully disclose all information regarding corporate contributions to these processes.

Countries must fulfil their commitments under the Convention to provide the necessary means of implementation, and redirect the billions of dollars of perverse incentives that support drivers of biodiversity loss, like industrial bioenergy, unsustainable livestock production, industrial monocultures, agrochemicals and GMOs, to protect biodiversity.

Synthetic biology: Make or break for the CBD?

Helena Paul, Econexus

The CBD has a major decision to make on synthetic biology at COP12. A great deal rests on it. Synthetic biology includes a number of modern biotechnology techniques, including many from standard genetic engineering. However, it goes beyond them in its use of human-made, computer-generated and often highly novel DNA, RNA and amino acids. It is difficult enough to assess the risks around genetic engineering, but synthetic biology greatly increases the level of complexity and the number of *unknowns* involved. However, so far there has been no real attempt to assess the impacts of any synthetic organism or component on biodiversity or human health. Yet industry attempts to persuade us that synthetic biology does not need special regulation and calculates that it will yield billions of dollars by 2020. Some of the largest corporations are involved, while certain governments, for example the UK, have already decided that synthetic biology will be a major area of investment and source of economic growth, so clearly the pressure to allow industry to proceed with few restrictions are considerable.

This means that the CBD has a special responsibility to act decisively. We need time to assess the implications of synthetic biology. We cannot allow pressure from economic interests to increase the risks to biodiversity and its sustainability. The CBD must apply the Precautionary Principle in its fullest sense to synthetic biology.

This would provide us with the time we need to device and carry out proper risk assessments. That would require the assessment of each of the technologies involved separately and their applications and also how they should be assessed, by whom and according to what guidance. We also need to ensure that proper risk assessments are undertaken that take into account all affected Parties. For example if synthetic vanilla is produced in one country and consumed in another, the impact on vanilla growers and biodiversity where the vanilla grows in the global South must be taken into account.

These are just some of the actions required if we are to be true to the fundamental principles of the CBD.

In fact, synthetic biology is a litmus test for how meaningful the convention is. If the CBD is *not* able to put the precautionary principle into practice on a new and emerging technology that carries such high risks, what hope is there that it can achieve the 2020 Goals or the Aichi Targets or halt the loss of biodiversity?

How to integrate biodiversity into the “real” global agenda?

Friedrich Wulf, Friends of the Earth Europe

After a noteworthy but sobering start of COP 12 which saw the publication of GBO-4 and the debate on the midterm review, today’s afternoon session of Working Group 1 will discuss biodiversity and sustainable development (Item 16). A key question of this COP is: “How do we put the CBD and its Strategic Plan into action?”

One answer to this, stemming from yesterday’s discussion on GBO-4, is “better implementation and better governance”.

Another answer is to integrate biodiversity into other sectoral agendas, such as trade or poverty eradication, as well as the overall global post-2015 policy framework currently being developed, the *sustainable development goals* (SDGs).

The UN Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals has elaborated a proposal for these SDGs with two goals related to biodiversity: *Goal 14 on Oceans* and *Goal 15 on Terrestrial Ecosystems*. While biodiversity is thus clearly visible in the sustainable development agenda, the document mentions some Aichi Targets but

glaringly neglects others (such as target 3 on removing incentives detrimental to biodiversity). There is also no reference to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as such.

- Under Item 16, COP will discuss on how the CBD will position itself towards the SDGs, based on recommendation 5/8 of WGRI. The reference under para 1 is brief and requests to “reflect” the Aichi Targets – the language should be strengthened to “endorse” or “integrate” this well-balanced and binding package of targets to which Parties have committed in 2010.
- The other important opportunity for parties to commit to the Aichi Targets as part of the entire global agenda will be the Gangwon Declaration the High-level Segment. This also needs clarification that not only “**elements**” of the objectives of the CBD and the Aichi Targets need to be integrated, but **all** of the Aichi targets on an equal footing. Para 8 of the draft should accordingly be changed.

Read more about this and other issues with the draft including a lack of recognition of ILCs and women’s roles, in our detailed briefing: http://www.cbdalliance.org/en/images/COP12/Briefing_notesCOP12/Briefing_on_Pyeongchang_roadmap_and_SDGs.pdf.