

Please check against delivery

High Level Plenary—Convention on Biological Diversity
Statement by Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
United Nations, New York, Wednesday, 22 September 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanur Rahim

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Fellow Delegates,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.

I thank the Secretary General, for holding the High Level Plenary on the Convention on Biological Diversity. I also thank the President and the delegates of the 64th UNGA for adopting the resolution on having the High Level Plenary this year.

Mr. President,

Our mother earth, through billions of years of evolutionary process, evolved a miraculous ecological balance where millions of species have been coexisting in harmony. Human beings have been for ages in the center of it all. Since our appearance, nature has been providing us with the resources and essentials vital for our survival and progress. Such blessings have inspired the birth of human civilization.

However, sadly we have not been grateful for our good fortune and blessings. We have ruthlessly exploited nature's bounty, upsetting the ecological balance, thereby placing our survival at risk. Our callous activities have increased destruction of biodiversity, at such an abnormal pace that our mother earth may sooner than expected, lose her vital functions of sustaining all living things, plants and animals, including human beings.

Most of the world's population is poor whose daily lives depend on biodiversity. This is one strong reason why world leaders set a target in 2002, to substantially reduce biodiversity loss by 2010, and integrated the same into the MDGs.

This year, we are observing the International Year of Biodiversity, and hence, today's High Level Plenary. We are due to meet again in Japan later this year, to craft a new vision on biodiversity.

Today's meeting is meant to take stock of the last 20 years, and sadly, the situation looks bleak. The onslaught on our planet's resources continues unabated. Therefore, the decisions we take here today, must promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and equitable sharing of the benefits from its use.

It must recognize the close links between our natural capital, and our development objectives. It must also establish the practical link between biodiversity loss and poverty, as in the theme of this Biodiversity Year, "Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation."

Mr. President,

Across the developing world, women farmers produce 60-80 percent of food. Unfortunately, they suffer disproportionately through biodiversity loss, land degradation, climate change, and deepening poverty. Yet, they are inadequately represented in decision making. I believe their opinion, need and interest would no doubt help successful formulation of conservation policies and programs.

I am delighted to note that the preamble to the Convention on CBD recognizes “the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable uses of biological diversity”. I am also pleased that what I have always believed and tried to practice in Bangladesh has been echoed in CBD affirmation of “the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation.”

Moreover, in his report, the Secretary General has rightly mentioned “In this International Year of Biodiversity, let us reflect on the root causes of biodiversity decline and take action to arrest it. Let us adjust policies and mindsets to reflect the true value of species and habitats. Let us recognize that biodiversity is life – our life. Let us act now to preserve it, before it is too late”. I am sure all of us here fully agree with him

Mr. President,

Before I conclude, may I suggest that we keep the following in mind in all our deliberations:

(1) Mankind’s activities are resulting in massive extinction of species and destabilizing nature’s balance in our planet. Let us with utmost sincerity, at least, slowdown the decline. It is possible with generous investment on preservation of our natural wealth.

(2) The International Year of Biodiversity’s theme is “Biodiversity is life – It is our life”. Today’s event and all such events during this “Biodiversity Year” must send a clear message to the Nagoya meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in October next.

(3) Biodiversity is worsening with increasing world population, poor people and poverty; adverse impacts of climate change; mindless exploitation of natural resources in total disregard to our natural environs harboring millions of species. Surely, the need of the hour is a new, effective strategy with genuine commitment from us all.

Mr. President,

I fervently urge this important gathering of world leaders to do whatever else is imperative, for conserving the biological diversity of our planet. Let us not forget that every species has a specific role to play in our world ecological system, and that they are all connected in a mysterious, miraculous chain with the sole purpose of preserving our planet.

Let us also not forget that their survival also may have a significant role in our survival on mother Earth.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

.....