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Rebranding Biodiversity for the Decade Ahead

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DRAFT Remarks (4 minutes each)
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Minister Hosono, Governor Tanimoto, Mr. Secretary General, distinguished colleagues and guests, first of all I want to thank the people of the City of Kanazawa for hosting this Global Launching ceremony. It is fitting that an endeavor dedicated to preserving the extraordinary diversity of plant and animal life on earth should commence at one of the most beautiful cities in Japan.

Let me express my sincere sympathy and solidarity with the Japanese people for the tragic losses caused by the massive earthquake and tsunami on 11 March this year. I am impressed with Japan's resilience, and I am confident that you are on the way to recovery from this disaster.

We are all here to celebrate the beginning of what the United Nations General Assembly has dubbed the "Decade of Biodiversity." Last year, the International Year on Biodiversity, the very successful Tenth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biodiversity was held in Nagoya with the remarkable leadership of the Government of Japan. The COP10 marked a historical milestone as the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing

as well as the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity and Aichi Targets were adopted.

Today the real challenge goes beyond naming decades and designing strategic plans. What we need to do, more fundamentally, is **rebrand** biodiversity. The goal is to get people to sit up and take notice, grasp the importance of this issue, understand the consequences of failure, and pressure their Governments back up their words with action.

We need to present biodiversity as a springboard for economic development, as an issue that forms an integral part of all our development plans. In this way we can achieve the critical mass of support necessary to achieve the targets in our Strategic Plan. The GEF already supports many of these innovative works, and we intend to do more.

Since the COP10, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the financial mechanism of the Convention, has been busy making sure that commitments by participating countries translate into concrete actions on the ground.

First, we have established a dedicated new trust fund under the GEF called the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund. It will support countries moving

swiftly to ratify and implement the Nagoya Protocol. We are grateful for the leadership and generous contribution provided by the Government of Japan.

Second, the GEF is helping more than 112 countries update their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to achieve the agreed Aichi Targets. The process will require each country to develop national targets, the results of which will effectively feed into the global targets.

Third, we have established a strong partnership with the Satoyama Initiative, a key effort launched by Japan at the COP. [*We are also signing a MOU today with the Japan Ministry of Environment.*] The partnership will further promote the need to mainstream biodiversity in productive agricultural and forest lands by making use of traditional knowledge.

Fourth, the GEF's Biodiversity Program has invested in more than \$3 billion toward worthy projects since its establishment, and we plan to invest up to \$1.1 billion within the next three years. Recently, the GEF Council approved the largest portfolio of projects, well over half a billion dollars in total, and we are promptly responding to the needs of the countries in implementing the biodiversity targets for the decade.

We need to do more and do it differently. That is what I mean by rebranding biodiversity. The inherent awe that humans have for nature—embodied in many forms, from the dry Zen garden of Ryoan-ji in Kyoto to the iconic tigers of India—is only a starting point. We need a new approach that links action on biodiversity to personal benefit and to gains in fields beyond environmental protection.

Again, I thank the people of Kanazawa City for their hospitality, and I join my colleagues in welcoming you all to this Global Launching ceremony.