

Taking the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity to the Future

I am Michihiko Kano, and received an appointment to the post of Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10), and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP5) for 2010 will be hosted by Japan in October 2010. This is a point of tremendous pride for me, particularly given the United Nations' declaration of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity and that I can participate in this meeting as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Japan's location in the temperate monsoon zone means that it experiences distinct seasonal changes. October, the month that COP10/MOP5 will be held, is the harvest season, a time when farmers throughout Japan will be busy harvesting their rice. It will also be when the lovely chirping of nighttime insects can be heard. And just as the meeting is drawing to a close, Japan will be entering the beautiful season of autumn colors, first in the northern regions and then throughout the country.

Japan is an archipelago comprised of some 7,000 islands, both large and small. And on each and every one of them, people are engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fishery that make full use of local characteristics and utilize a broad range of biological relationships.

Particularly noteworthy in Japan is the fact that rural residents' sustainable management of agriculture, forestry, and fishery forms and maintains unique natural environments called *satochi*, *satoyama*, and *satoumi* in Japanese (literally "rural land," "rural mountain," and "rural sea") and contributes to the conservation of biodiversity.

Among the various ways these activities are manifested are paddy fields, which form collected water zone on land. The fields serve an important role in creating various ecosystems that include aquatic animals.

This kind of sustainable use of biodiversity in rural villages allows us to enjoy Mother Nature's abundant gifts throughout the year. It has also given rise to a multitude of cultural traditions that are associated with agriculture, forestry, and fishery. The autumn harvest is the prime

example of this.

The Japanese people often say *shokuyoku no aki*, which means “autumn is the season of good appetite.” As this phrase suggests, autumn is a time when food is especially delicious. I hope that when you visit Japan, you will enjoy fantastic dining and the beautiful natural scenery.

The COP10/MOP5 meetings will be events for discussion of some extremely important topics regarding the conservation of biodiversity. Among them will be “establishment of new targets for the conservation of biodiversity,” “formulation of international regime for access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing,” and “adoption of a supplementary protocol on liability and redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.” Everyone in attendance will be required to make significant efforts toward resolving these issues. And as the chairman of MOP5, I hereby state my intention to contribute to the meeting’s success.

Recent advancements in science and technology are leading to the emergence of various living modified organisms. The safety of these organisms is attracting considerable concern among the public, and thus all countries will need to work together to ensure their safety. As the chairman of MOP5, and as the person entrusted with food safety in Japan as Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, I intend to tackle this problem earnestly and proactively.

I look forward to seeing you in Nagoya.

Michihiko Kano

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Government of Japan