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(transcribed from video footage)

I would first like to congratulate the President of Palau for this initiative and I wish him every success for the Micronesia challenge.

Madagascar subscribes completely to the decision of the COP on small islands and feels solidarity with islands, being itself an island which is characterized by the importance of biodiversity, of which knowledge is still relatively limited.

Biodiversity of islands is recognized as unique and a great part of their fauna and flora is unique and endemic in various ecosystems.

I think that we have to give to islands, small islands in particular, urgent attention. As regards marine and coastal ecosystems, biodiversity is poorly known. The worst forms of exploitation continue. The few rapid assessments done show the importance of threats of this venerable biodiversity and these ecosystems. The Programme of Work planned by COP will have to be applied as soon as possible.

At the national level, various measures were taken by the Government of Madagascar in order to reduce the loss of various ecosystems of the island. For this reason, amongst measures taken, I would like to remind you, that in Durban, we made commitments during the IUCN Congress in September 2003 to triple the area of protected areas from 1.6 million to 6 million hectares until 2010.

Currently, 1,050, 000 hectares of new protected areas were created at the end of 2005, and we intend to register another million hectares in June 2006. We wanted that the protected areas that we create with the participation of multiple actors are effective and efficient and are not just protected areas on paper.

These new protected areas correspond perfectly to the three objectives of the CBD that we have appropriated.

We have adapted certain principles. The first of these principles is better representation of ecosystems. In the past, our protected areas in the country consisted only of forest ecosystems, but currently, marine and coastal ecosystems and humid zones are also conserved.

The second principle concerns governance. Protected area management is not only a public administration affair. Actually, currently, local government, private sector, and local communities are also able to manage and they can contribute effectively in this protected area management.

The third principle – benefit sharing. Biodiversity richness has to have an impact on the livelihoods of the populations and particularly local communities.

Currently we have adopted a system of protected areas that covers a large range of objectives of management and government from strict areas to more open areas that would allow us to respond to economic needs of populations.

Economic activities that are sustainable can contribute efficiently to reduce poverty and can also correspond to principles of sustainable use in protected areas.

In our actions in country, the sustainability of funds is very important. That's the reason why we created in Madagascar a Foundation, not just a fund, for Biodiversity and Protected Areas, aimed at ensuring long-term biodiversity management and protected area management has to be independent.

In this way, we contribute to a network in the Indian Ocean region of Marine Protected Areas that needs to be dynamic, and also would like to contribute to a global network that needs to be reinforced. In this way, we hope we could attempt the 2010 objective. However even with participation of multiple multi- and bi-lateral donors in country, we still need funds for these protected areas.

I would like to thank all of you for your support of islands, for your support of sustainable management and conservation and support for sustainable development.

Thank you.