

COP10 leaders want to do the right thing

Title Here we go! This week started the tenth Conference of Parties (COP10) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The expectations for the conference are high, according to the speeches of the leaders at the its opening ceremony ? there is of course the hope that COP10 will make important steps forward for biodiversity. But there is the fear of a ?second Copenhagen? - that governments will again fail to agree on concrete measures to secure our common future. But first, upon arrival thousands of participants registered, photographed and were issued an access card. Each time you visit the site you are security checked including luggage, bottles of water by light and cameras too. Here, also, I was afraid of experiencing a second Copenhagen ? where I spent many hours queuing. But no trace of it here ? the Japanese security forces as all the volunteer helpers at the conference are so far very efficient and give a well organized impression ? and they are also extremely friendly! In the ?Century Hall? where the opening ceremony took place, it started with a magnificent performance of Japanese flute and shadow puppets, a storyline about what is at stake for the representatives of the 193 countries present at this meeting. Jochen Flasbarth, who represented the outgoing German CBD Presidency and Minister of the Environment Röttgen went straight to the point: ?You, all delegates can contribute to the success of the conference ? and the test whether you have managed this is simple. Imagine you come back home. Your kids are waiting for Mum or Dad coming from this strange conference somewhere in the world. Can you explain what you have done here in Nagoya? Can you explain and can you justify what you have done?" Flasbarth handed the CBD-presidency for the next two years to the Japanese Environment Minister Ryu Matsumoto. The Minister, as well as Achim Steiner, head of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the General Secretary of the CBD Ahmed Djoghlaif appealed urgently to all governments to move the issue of ?ABS? ? Progress in tackling the biodiversity crisis needs an agreement between the world?s nations on the access to genetic resources, and sharing of benefits arising from their use. Steiner said that Nagoya is a test of whether the world?s governments are still able to make joint decisions for the future of the world. The real work is now starting, several working groups are meeting, discussing and a then there are a plethora of smaller informal ?contact groups? being set up. So now the hard work begins! Governments will start to discuss and negotiate on every word and comma of the texts. Over the coming days I?ll report on how the Governments are behaving together.