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Mr. Yukio Hatoyama  
Prime Minister of Japan

April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010

Dear Prime Minister,

In only half a year, in October 2010, Japan will be host to the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10). The meeting will be held in the city of Nagoya.

At this important point in time we wish to convey to you that we are seriously worried about Japan's international reputation. We believe that Japan unawares is taking a big risk. We have visited Japan recently and have come to love the country. We therefore feel compelled to tell you about this risk.

We travelled in Japan from March 22 to April 2 as representatives of our association and visited a number of beautiful nature areas, some of them located close to very densely populated big cities. We found these areas to be precious pockets of rich ecosystems, very suitable for nature school activities, outdoor education and environmental education and of course biodiversity education. During meetings and discussion we also learned that many Japanese people have come very far from nature in their daily lives. Those natural areas are therefore even more important, as the people are many and the accessible nature areas are few. Now we need to tell you that we were shocked to find that those areas will soon be destroyed by various private or public construction projects.

How can Japan hope for a successful COP 10 as host country? We think the opposite might happen - the world might be shocked just like us.

Visiting those places we had other visions. For example we arrived at a road being built in the direction of a peaceful wetland in a valley. It was built for trucks and bulldozers. We imagined instead the light feet of children stepping along a path, carrying the bodies of playful children with heads full of expectations, looking forward to a day among dragonflies, nightengales, frogs and orchids. Imagine the children meeting an enthusiastic nature school teacher

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down the path, who is looking forward to showing the children around in this little paradise. A nature school teacher who uses the Japanese national curriculum for learning just like in the school classroom while taking the childrens' own curiosity and wish for discovery as a starting point.


With COP10 only six months ahead, these areas could be a wonderful opportunity for Japanese people to reconnect with nature and once again find expression for the harmony between people and nature that is such an important concept in your unique culture. We believe that then, all Japanese people would start to care about those beautiful nature areas, and the world would be encouraged by the good example of Japan.

We have found that Japan has many resources. There are nature schools in Japan and people with ability to develop programs for teacher educations and courses for active school teachers. We hope you will discover those resources and give them a important role in the creation of a sustainable Japanese society.



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