

Geneva, 10th May, 2016

Press Conference by IUCN and Toyota

Remarks by Didier Leroy, Executive Vice President, Toyota Motor Corporation

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Didier Leroy, and I am Executive Vice President of Toyota Motor Corporation.

Let me first thank the reporters and journalists for being here today.

Also... I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the international organisations and NGOs... for sparing your precious time to attend this announcement.

Many people outside of Japan... including many journalists... often assume that Toyota is based in Tokyo. But it's not the case.

In fact... our company is based in Aichi prefecture ... near Nagoya. Aichi Prefecture is originally a very rural and agricultural province... and our corporate values are rooted in this rural history.

Aichi Prefecture is also the place where in 2010... the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity set out its Strategic Plan for 2020.

This plan included the goal "to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss... by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society".

This is very fitting... but it is a coincidence.

There are many additional reasons for Toyota to support the IUCN and its efforts to identify the species that are critical to global biodiversity.

Since its foundation, Toyota has addressed environmental issues as a key challenge ... with the idea that our company's actions should contribute to the development of a sustainable society.

This is what led us... in the 1990s... to plan for mobility in the 21st century.

We realised that we needed to create environmentally-friendly vehicles... and sell them on a large scale... to have a true beneficial impact on the environment.

This initiative gave birth to the famous Toyota Prius... and to the 8.5 million hybrid vehicles we have sold until today... saving more than 60 million tons of CO₂.

Twenty years later... we are aiming for a zero-emission future by launching the first mass-produced hydrogen fuel cell sedan... the Mirai... which means “future” in Japanese. We strongly believe in the need to diversify energy sources and lower our dependence on fossil fuels. And we think hydrogen has a big role to play to achieve this goal.

Of course... today... there is still a very limited hydrogen infrastructure. We know this is just the beginning. But we believe it is our responsibility to take the lead now... for a better future.

When it comes to protecting our planet... we know it will also take time to achieve the targets the world needs to reach... and that various aspects are completely inter-linked.

In October last year... we announced the Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050.

Of course... as a car maker... we should focus on global warming and air pollution.

To this end... our first three challenges are about minimizing our impact.

But that is not enough. We also want to have a net positive impact... meaning... we want to create value for society beyond providing clean mobility.

So... we added three more challenges... that are focused on resources which are important to the world.

Through what we call “Challenge Number 6”... we aim to establish a future society in harmony with nature.

That is why we are here today... side by side with IUCN.

As part of that... Toyota has decided to help the IUCN inventory the species that are important to biodiversity... and to global food supplies.

As Director General Andersen and Dr Smart explained, the global environment remains in a critical situation.

And if we don't start acting now... we will never be able to have an impact by the time we need to.

And I must admit... in this area... sardines...soles... and wild rice plants... are more important than cars.

Despite the various biodiversity activities to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2020... we are currently in a tight spot and risk not being able to achieve the target.

This brings me to the second reason why we are here today.

When we looked at the IUCN's Red List... it really spoke to us at Toyota.

We are a fact-based... data-driven company.

I joined Toyota in 1998... because I wanted to understand why it was such a different and successful company... especially in manufacturing.

To make high quality cars... our obsession is to identify problems... quantify the gap... and find solutions to close that gap... systematically.

At Toyota... we often say... "if you don't have a problem... you have a problem!"

We also believe in checking the facts... right where they are happening... in order to grasp the correct picture of what is happening on the shop floor.

In Japanese... we call it "genchi genbutsu".

Assessing the gap is exactly what IUCN has been doing with the Red List.

Without the knowledge of this barometer of life... it would be impossible for other NGOs... governments... and society... to protect and restore biodiversity.

We want to be a small part in that effort.

In 2016... we will provide a grant for this project, and we will continue supporting the organization at similar levels for the next five years.

This should enable the IUCN to increase the number of species in their assessment by 28,000 ... bringing them significantly closer to their goal of having 160,000 species on the list by 2020.

Furthermore... we will consider launching other nature conservation projects around the world in collaboration with other international organisations and NGOs.

Through the work of IUCN and our collaboration on biodiversity... we hope that the world will one day... be a plentiful rice field again.

Thank you very much.