



United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/1/Inf.12
8 December 1994

ENGLISH ONLY

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
First meeting
Nassau, 28 November - 9 December 1994

DECLARATION BY THE MINISTERS OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)
AT THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS, 8 DECEMBER 1994

The AOSIS Ministers and Heads of Delegation of member States of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) met in Nassau, The Bahamas, on 8 December 1994 during the First Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

The meeting was attended by Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the following AOSIS member States: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Comoros, The Cook Islands, Cuba, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, The Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, The Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and The Seychelles. Also present at the meeting were the President of the Conference, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, and a representative of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

The Ministers:

Warmly thanked the people and the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, a member of AOSIS, for taking the initiative in, and so magnificently hosting, the First Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Recognized the crucial importance of cooperation among small island developing states, on an inter- and intra-regional basis, on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Therefore affirmed the need for Ministers to engage in consultations as often as circumstances permit.

Confirmed the high priority that small island developing states place on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, in light of the unique species diversity of small island developing states, their small size, isolation and the fragility of their ecosystems, and their limited economic base.

Noted that although the full extent of the biodiversity of small island developing states remains unknown, there is evidence that considerable terrestrial species diversity exists on island countries and that these countries are even richer in marine genetic resources and species which thrive in their coastal ecosystems.

Noted with concern, however, that, on account of the small size of islands and the endemic nature of many species' gene pools, the biological diversity of islands is extremely fragile and that minor anthropogenic disturbances that may have little or no impact on the biodiversity of continental countries can have severe adverse impacts on the biodiversity of small island countries. Fragility and endemity are therefore the two major characteristics of small islands' biodiversity that warrant urgent conservation measures.

Therefore, expressed deep satisfaction at the inclusion of coastal and marine biodiversity as a priority item in the medium-term work program of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and their readiness to contribute to

the implementation of specific activities for the protection of coral reefs, marine fisheries, and integrated coastal zone management.

Welcomed the entry into force and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and anticipated with satisfaction the successful conclusion of negotiations of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, with the hope that these agreements will enable the international community to cooperate effectively in protecting and conserving marine and coastal biological diversity.

Accepted the need for international cooperation for the protection and conservation of marine and coastal biological diversity through a global regime on land-based sources of marine pollution, including a legally-binding instrument for the regulation of the discharge of persistent organic pollutants into the ocean.

Recognized the urgent need to phase out the substances that deplete the ozone layer and called upon the international community, in particular, the Multilateral Fund under the Montreal Protocol, to enhance the implementation of country Programmes by providing adequate and timely funds.

Emphasized the threat that accelerated climate change, and predicted rises in the level and temperature of the seas, pose to fragile marine and coastal biological diversity, and called upon the developed country Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to demonstrate that they are taking the lead toward achieving the Convention's Objective by adopting, at their first Conference of the Parties, the proposed Protocol on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Reaffirmed the need for small island developing states to participate fully in the global efforts toward sustainable development, and in particular, to continue and intensify their participation in the key international negotiations in the areas of biological diversity, the law of the sea, fisheries, land-based sources of marine pollution, trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes, climate change and ozone depletion.

Emphasized the urgent needs of small island developing states for new and additional financial resources, provided in adequate, predictable and timely flows, in order to respond effectively to these challenges.

Stressed the essential importance to small island developing states of technical cooperation and capacity building for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Recalled the Preamble, and Article 20.6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which requires Contracting Parties in their actions with regard to funding and transfer of technologies to take into consideration the special conditions of small island developing states.

Recalled also the relevant provisions of the Barbados Declaration and the Report of the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States at Barbados, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Agenda 21, which reflect the commitment of the international community to assist small island developing states in facing the challenges of global environmental threats and sustainable development.

Called upon the international community to adopt measures to mobilize financial and technological resources for the implementation of the Program of Action agreed at the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States at Barbados, with particular regard to Chapter IX, on Biodiversity Resources.

Decided to request that this Declaration be made an official document of the Conference and be distributed as such.

Concluded by thanking all of those who have contributed to whatever successes the Group has enjoyed, including governments, intergovernmental and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, members of the private sector, and the international news media.