



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Caribbean States become Biodiversity Champions** *Second phase of Caribbean Challenge Initiative launched*

*Montreal, 14 August 2013* – To further accelerate marine and coastal conservation action in the region and establish more sustainable business practices, eight Caribbean governments, together with several business partners, have assumed the mantle of Biodiversity Champions and made significant financial and substantive commitments in support of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

These commitments, amounting to \$75 million, and significant actions were announced as part of the second phase of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI), launched at a Summit of Caribbean Political and Business Leaders during 17-18 May, 2013 in the British Virgin Islands, to which the Secretariat of the Convention was invited by one of the hosts, the Government of Grenada, as one of the chairs of the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA).

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), said: “I would like to recognize the Caribbean governments and business leaders for their visionary commitments, with particular appreciation to the Government of Grenada and the British Virgin Islands as an overseas territory of the UK, as well as Virgin Group, GLISPA and The Nature Conservancy, for their leading roles in the success of the event. Once more, islanders “walk the talk” in the Convention, inspiring us all and turning the CBD Strategic Plan into reality”

Mr. Dias added: “At the request of the Government of Grenada, nominated at the meeting as interim Secretariat to the Caribbean Challenge, I would like to disseminate the outcomes of this event as pledges to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in our Biodiversity Champions campaign.”

The Biodiversity Champions campaign, launched at the Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) to the CBD held in Hyderabad, India, in 2012, an initiative of the Government of India and the CBD Secretariat, allows countries and organizations to make pledges to support one or more of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Mr. Dias invited all CBD Parties, relevant partners and major groups to:

- Promote and support high-level regional or global commitments, including those integrated into their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, that effectively mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services into “green and blue economy” approaches towards sustainable development, also as a contribution towards the third International Conference of Small Island



Convention on  
Biological Diversity

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity  
United Nations Environment Programme  
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada  
Tel : +1 514 288 2220 Fax : +1 514 288 6588  
[secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)



Developing States, organized by the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), scheduled to take place in Samoa in 2014

- Adopt and expand proven and cost-effective mechanisms and tools of the Convention (such as the Clearing House Mechanism, LifeWeb, the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, and regional challenges, the Resource Mobilization Strategy), to strengthen local capacity, and consider developing these and other innovative financial arrangements to mobilize additional resources in support of the implementation of the programme of work on Island Biodiversity
- Support GLISPA as an effective platform for coordination, project development, capacity building, fundraising, monitoring and exchanges, open to all Parties and partners.

“I welcome any suggestions on how the Secretariat can make these and other regional challenges more effective, to invite further pledges to the Biodiversity Champions campaign to be highlighted at COP 12 in Korea, and to invite Parties to bring examples of island solutions and commitments to SBSTTA and WGRI towards COP 12 in Korea 2014,” added Mr. Dias.

The eight countries (The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis and the British Virgin Islands) signed a Leaders Declaration that contains key commitments to marine and coastal conservation, including: “In each participating country and territory, to effectively conserve and manage at least 20% of the marine and coastal environment by 2020.” To help achieve this goal, governments agreed to have in place, by 2020, fully functioning sustainable finance mechanisms as a contribution to achieve target 20 of the CBD.

A set of seven specific actions was also agreed, covering a broad scope of issues related to the marine environment (e.g. marine protected areas, fisheries, tourism, climate change adaptation, and marine pollution).

The commitments are relevant to the implementation of several Aichi Biodiversity Targets, most notably Target 11 on marine protected areas, but also support Target 14 on restoring and safeguarding ecosystems that support human health, livelihoods and well-being and Target 15 related to, resilience and restoration as well as to Targets 5, 6, 7, 10 and 12.

Fifteen companies signed a Corporate Compact, containing key commitments to support marine and coastal conservation, including through changes in business practices, and formally joined the CCI.

Three specific areas for further work were identified:

- (i) The urgent need to create protection for sharks and rays across the whole Caribbean region, with the aim of protecting them within two years
- (ii) Establishing a clear regulatory framework that delivers a systemic and regional approach to conservation of the marine and coastal environment, including increasing considerably the number of marine protected areas
- (iii) A dramatic acceleration in transition from fossil fuels to alternative energy sources over the next five years.

Many specific and wide-ranging conservation commitments were made at the summit, such as: expansion of marine protected area (MPA) systems, designation of new MPAs, establishment of national trust funds and changes in business practices.

## *Notes to Editors*

### *More information:*

- Biodiversity Champions: [www.cbd.int/champions/list/](http://www.cbd.int/champions/list/)
- The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States: [www.sids2014.org/](http://www.sids2014.org/)

### **The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 166 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. For more information visit: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int).

For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at [david.ainsworth@cbd.int](mailto:david.ainsworth@cbd.int); or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at [johan.hedlund@cbd.int](mailto:johan.hedlund@cbd.int).

-----