



Secretariat of the
Convention on Biological Diversity
MESSAGE OF DR AHMED DJOGHLAF



EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

on the occasion of the

WORLD OCEAN DAY

8 JUNE 2008

SUSTAINING THE BLUE PLANET: OUR OCEAN OUR FUTURE

The Convention on Biological Diversity, a guardian of marine biodiversity, is celebrating World Ocean Day, 8 June, together with various members of ocean biodiversity family around the Blue Planet, which really should be called “Ocean”, not “Earth”.

In addition to occupying 70% of the planet’s surface and thus making our Planet a Blue Globe, the oceans constitute over 90% of the volume of the biosphere. They contain the evolutionary origins of biodiversity on Earth, with 75% of the major taxa of organisms being exclusively or primarily marine. The unique physical and chemical properties of our oceans render them excellent hosts for an abundance and diversity of life.

“*One Nature, One World, Our Future*” was the motto of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties—the Bonn Biodiversity Summit—held in May 2008, the largest-ever gathering of the biodiversity family. In Bonn, the Parties to the Convention reaffirmed that our future lies in the ocean and recognized that strong evidence has been compiled to emphasize the need for urgent action to protect biodiversity in selected seabed habitats and marine areas in need of protection.

The Parties then took a historic step forward for the conservation of marine biodiversity, particularly in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, by **adopting scientific criteria** for identifying biologically and ecologically significant marine areas in need of protection in open ocean waters and deep sea habitats as well as **scientific guidance** for selecting areas to establish representative network of marine protected areas.

The scientific criteria and guidance have been developed by the CBD Expert Workshop on Ecological Criteria and Biogeographic Classification Systems for Marine Areas in need of Protection, held in the Azores, Portugal, from 2 to 4 October 2007. The results of the Azores



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COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008



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Workshop reflect a rigorous consolidation of national, regional and international experiences of more than a decade. The adoption of these criteria opened a new stage for the ocean biodiversity family to play more active and consolidated role in safeguarding the marine biodiversity, including marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. It also further strengthened the role of Convention in providing scientific and technical support to the United Nations General Assembly processes relevant to the conservation of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

As a next step, the Parties to the Convention also decided to convene an expert workshop in order to provide scientific and technical guidance on the use and further development of biogeographic classification systems, and guidance on the identification of areas beyond national jurisdiction, which meet the scientific criteria.

The role of indigenous and local communities in the future process was also highlighted, and the Conference of the Parties called on Parties to integrate the traditional, scientific, technical and technological knowledge of indigenous and local communities, and to ensure the integration of social and cultural criteria and other aspects for the identification of marine areas in need of protection as well as the establishment and management of marine protected areas.

Moreover, in the context of United Nations General Assembly processes related to conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, the Conference of the Parties invited Parties and others to cooperate in further developing scientific and technical guidance for the implementation of environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments for activities and processes under their jurisdiction and control which may have significant adverse impacts on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. For this purpose, the Parties decided to convene an expert workshop to contribute to the development of such scientific and technical guidance, building on ongoing relevant sectoral, regional and national environmental-impact-assessment efforts.

The Parties also sounded a warning on the potential impacts of direct human-induced ocean fertilization on marine biodiversity, and requested Parties and others, in accordance with the precautionary approach, to ensure that ocean-fertilization activities do not take place until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify them.

In particular, the Parties to the Convention requested the Executive Secretary to collaborate closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC), the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), scientific expert groups, indigenous and local communities, and other relevant international and regional organizations.

As such, on this year's World Ocean Day, all the members of ocean biodiversity family are invited to renew their commitment to the Jakarta Mandate and share their wisdom, knowledge, expertise, experiences, and resources toward implementing the commitments made at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

By working closely together for One Ocean, we can safeguard the sustainability of Our Future in this Blue Planet.

Our Future lies in Our Ocean!

I thank you for your attention.