



Convention on
Biological Diversity



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

22 MAY 2009

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES

STATEMENT

by

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

at the

**EXPERT WORKSHOP ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL
GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF BIOGEOGRAPHIC
CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS AND IDENTIFICATION OF
MARINE AREAS IN NEED OF PROTECTION BEYOND
NATIONAL JURISDICTION**

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Distinguished Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this important Expert Workshop on Scientific and Technical Guidance on the Use of Biogeographic Classification Systems and Identification of Marine Areas in Need of Protection beyond National Jurisdiction. I would like to first extend my sincere appreciation to the Governments of Canada and Germany for generously hosting and co-funding the Workshop in this beautiful city, Ottawa. My warmest thanks also go to all the partners who have made significant scientific contributions to the successful preparation for this workshop.

This year, the international community celebrated the first United Nations-designated World Ocean Day on 8^t June. Although belated, this global celebration under the theme of “Our oceans, our responsibility”, clearly emphasized our individual and collective duty to protect the marine environment and carefully manage its resources, as stated by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his message.

Today, we gathered here ~~today~~ to scientifically and technically support the Parties to the CBD in undertaking faithfully their responsibilities toward conserving the biodiversity in the remote part of our oceans.

With the rapidly increasing speed of scientific and technological advancement in accessing the once hidden deep-sea habitats and resources, human activities impose threats on sustainability of these valuable ecosystems at an unprecedented pace and intensity. The adverse impacts of global climate change further compound the situations at global scale, and limit our scientific and managerial ability to respond in timely and adequate manner.

We are yet challenged by the urgent need for mainstreaming the biodiversity agenda in various national socio-economic development planning. It is, and will remain, a daunting task to open the minds of policy makers overwhelmed by the economic crisis to the issues of hydrothermal vents, seamounts, cold-coral communities, and so forth. However, all these challenges should not discourage us. With a highly recognized sense of urgency, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its ninth meeting, urged Parties and invited other Governments and relevant organizations to apply, as appropriate, the scientific criteria and the scientific guidance to identify ecologically or biologically significant and/or vulnerable marine areas in need of protection.

The application of the scientific criteria and guidance, based on the best available scientific information and applying the precautionary approach and the ecosystem approach, will enable Parties to help halt the rapid losses in marine biodiversity in open ocean waters and deep sea habitats. The results of this workshop will, therefore, become key inputs to assist Parties in their endeavours to implement this decision of the Conference of the Parties.

The submissions made by Parties and various partners on their experiences in applying or potentially applying the Convention’s scientific criteria clearly demonstrate that our will to conserve biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction is being consolidated and gaining common ground of scientific understanding, which will support

policy discussion of the relevant processes under the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Convention Secretariat has also been closely communicating with the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility to address the need for building of scientific and technical capacities of developing countries in applying the Convention's scientific criteria to identify marine areas in need of protection. Similarly, I wish to remind you of such huge need for capacity development in developing countries in your deliberations at this workshop. In this regard, I look forward to see your collective wisdom for balancing scientific excellence with the need for practicality in on-ground implementation.

I would like to also emphasize that your efforts are very critical to meeting the global commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the establishment of representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012. As you are well aware, the world's oceans are seriously under-protected, with only approximately 0.8% of the oceans and 6% of territorial seas being within protected area systems. With this slow pace of implementation, we will achieve our 2012 target of 10% marine coverage only by 2047.

This reality clearly tells that much needs to be done, in very urgent manner, to further enhance our collective responsibility in conserving marine biodiversity. I therefore call for your consolidated cooperation to reaffirm our commitments to achieve the target set at the World Summit for marine protected areas and further highlight the urgent need for marine biodiversity conservation in the process of developing and adopting post-2010 targets at the forthcoming tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Nagoya, Japan.

Finally, I would like to invite all of you to join hands with us in celebrating the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), together with Parties, CBD partners and other global communities. In particular, I am happy to inform you that the international celebration of the International Year will culminate in a gathering of Heads of States and Governments on 20 September 2010 at United Nations Headquarters to discuss the issue of biological diversity. I therefore wish to encourage you to closely collaborate with the Convention Secretariat to bring the challenges of marine biodiversity conservation to the attention of high-level policy makers at this valuable opportunity.

With this, I wish you productive deliberations and a successful outcome of this workshop.

Thank you for your attention.