

STATEMENT BY

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**5TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON OCEANS, COASTS AND
ISLANDS: ENSURING SURVIVAL, PRESERVING LIFE, AND
IMPROVING GOVERNANCE**

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Honourable Excellencies,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentleman,

I would like to first extend my sincere appreciation to Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, Co-Chair of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands, for her remarkable leadership in mobilizing the global ocean communities and partners to join forces for the celebration of 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. My heartfelt thanks also go to the Government of France and the UNESCO/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission for hosting and organizing this important event and signifying their strong and continued support for the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Next Monday at 10 am on 10 May, we will have an exciting moment to release the third edition of Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO3). The launching of GBO3 will take place in Nairobi, Paris and all the other UN headquarters around the world. GBO3 will present the state of world biodiversity in 2010, drawing extensively from the 120 national reports submitted by Parties to the CBD.

Unfortunately, the news on biodiversity status is not positive. The GBO 3 shows multiple indicators of continuing decline in biodiversity at unprecedented rate. Majority of the submitted national reports have indicated the global climate change as one of the most important driving force behind the continuing loss of biodiversity. Such finding also applies to marine and coastal biodiversity.

Coastal habitats such as mangroves, seagrass beds, salt marshes and shellfish reefs continue to decline in extent, threatening highly valuable ecosystem services. Such decline also degrades their contribution to removing significant quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The FAO estimates that about one-fifth of the world's mangroves covering 36,000 square kilometers, were lost between 1980 and 2005. The quantity of carbon buried each year by vegetated coastal habitats has been estimated at between 120 and 329 million tones, which are in a range almost equal to the annual greenhouse gas emissions of Japan.

Tropical coral reefs, which contribute significantly to the livelihoods and security of coastal regions, have suffered a significant global decline in biodiversity since the 1970s. It is estimated that between 500 million and more than one billion people rely on coral reefs as a food source. Coral reefs also support approximately 25% of all marine fish species. This important habitat, however, face multiple threats including overfishing, land-based pollution, and destructive fishing as well as the bleaching due to increased sea temperature as a result of climate change. Moreover, rising carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere will result in sea water becoming more acidic, reducing the biocalcification of tropical and cold-water coral reefs as well as other shell-forming organisms, such as calcareous phytoplankton, and impacting the entire marine food chain. Unfortunately, we do not know yet clearly the magnitude and frequency of such risks.

The GBO 3 presents possible future outcomes for biodiversity change during the rest of the 21st century. Continuing species extinctions far above the historic rate, loss of habitats and changes in the distribution and abundance of species are projected throughout this century according to all scenarios. If the Earth system is pushed beyond certain thresholds or tipping points, there is a high risk of dramatic biodiversity loss and accompanying degradation of a broad range of ecosystem services.

Such irreversible changes in biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation could be prevented, significantly reduced or even reversed, if strong action is applied urgently and comprehensively at international, national and local levels.

In this regard, Parties to the Convention will adopt in Nagoya a new Strategic Plan 2011-2020, which contains a strategic goals and targets for mobilizing urgent and comprehensive actions at the international level in order to reverse the tide of rapid biodiversity loss.

Some of suggested targets directly relevant to marine and coastal biodiversity include:

- By 2020, overfishing is ended and destructive fishing practices are eliminated.
- By 2020, all areas under aquaculture are managed sustainably.
- By 2020, pollution from excess nutrients and other sources has been brought below critical ecosystem loads.
- By 2020, pathways for the introduction and establishment of invasive alien species have been controlled, and established invasive alien species are identified, prioritized and controlled or eradicated.
- By 2020, manage the multiple pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable species and ecosystems impacted by climate change and ocean acidification so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.
- By 2020, at least 15% of sea areas, including the areas of particular importance for biodiversity, have been protected through representative networks of effectively managed protected areas and other means, and integrated into the wider land- and seascape.
- The extinction of known threatened species has been prevented.

These goals and targets will be presented before the Head of State and Government, when they gather at a high-level meeting on biodiversity, for the first time in its history, during the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly in coming September.

I therefore welcome the initiatives of the Global Forum to organize "**Oceans Day**" in Nagoya and formulate the "**Nagoya Ocean Mandate**" as a way of mobilizing the support of various ocean partners and stakeholders towards renewing global commitments to the Jakarta Mandates. This initiative is very timely and crucial to the successful implementation of the new CBD Strategic Plan.

Recently, I had a joy to watch a remarkable movie, "Oceans", directed by Jacques Perrin and Jacques Cluzaud. As was narrated in the film, while images of the garbage patch in the North Pacific Gyre floating on screen, "**Human indifference is surely the oceans' greatest threat**".

I sincerely hope that our collaborative efforts will convince global communities and help them overcome their indifference to the valuable richness of ocean biodiversity.

2010 will be a major opportunity for the biodiversity family that cannot be missed. We look forward to excellent collaboration with the Global Forum to seize this critical moment.

Thank you for your attention.