



**Statement on Behalf of the Executive Secretary to the Convention on
Biological Diversity**

on the occasion of

The 2nd International Conference on Marine Mammal Protected Areas
(7 to 11 November 2011, Martinique)

Excellencies,

Distinguished representatives and experts,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

On behalf of the Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity, I would like to first extend our sincere thanks to the organizers of this Conference for inviting CBD Secretariat to participate in this important meeting on marine mammal protected areas. Our special thanks go to French MPA Agency and NOAA, which have been closely collaborating with CBD Secretariat and contributing significantly to advancing various marine works of the Convention.

In Nagoya, October last year, the Conference of Parties to the Convention, at its tenth meeting, adopted a new ten year Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the next decade, together with the historic adoption of a new international protocol on access to and sharing of the benefits from the use of the genetic resources.

The Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 presents 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including Target 11, for which COP committed, ***“By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are***

conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

The new Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets were endorsed as an overarching framework on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use for the entire international community, including the other biodiversity-related conventions as well as the United Nations system.

In decision X/29 on marine and coastal biodiversity, the COP 10 noted with concern the slow progress towards achieving the 2012 target of establishment of marine protected areas, including representative networks. COP 10 highlighted that despite efforts in the last few years, just over 1 per cent of the ocean surface is designated as protected areas, compared to nearly 15 per cent of protected-area coverage on land.

In response, COP 10 endorsed guidance for enhanced implementation of the Programme of Work on marine and coastal biodiversity, including among other things:

- Further efforts on improving the coverage, representativity and other network properties of the global system of marine and coastal protected areas, in particular identifying ways to accelerate progress in establishing ecologically representative and effectively managed marine and coastal protected areas under national jurisdiction or in areas subject to international regimes competent for the adoption of such measures

COP 10 also emphasized that areas found to meet the ecologically or biologically significant areas criteria may require enhanced conservation and management measures, and that this can be achieved through a variety of means, including marine protected areas and impact assessments.

COP 10 encouraged Parties, other Governments and competent intergovernmental organizations to cooperate collectively or on a regional or subregional basis, to identify and adopt appropriate measures for conservation and sustainable use in relation to ecologically or biologically significant areas including by establishing representative networks of marine protected areas.

Upon the request of COP 10, CBD Secretariat is currently convening a series of regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas. The regional workshop covering Wide Caribbean and mid-Atlantic region will be hosted by Brazil in February 2012. The results of the EBSA regional workshops will be submitted to the Scientific Body of the Convention for its consideration and COP for its endorsement.

The scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs), which was adopted by the COP at its ninth meeting, include a set of 7 criterion: (1) Uniqueness or rarity, (2) special importance for life-history stages of species, (3) importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats, (4) vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity or slow recovery, (5) biological productivity, (6) biological diversity, and (7) naturalness.

As such, the set of CBD EBSA criteria provides a useful scientific tool to identify ecologically or biologically important areas that can contribute to the protection of marine mammals.

Distinguished Representatives,

In the year of 2012, the world will renew its commitment toward the sustainable development by convening the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 or 'Rio+20'. The Conference will assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and addressing new and emerging challenges.

In order to effectively facilitate efforts at global, regional and national levels toward achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets and highlighting the role of marine biodiversity in sustainable development, the CBD Secretariat has set the theme of International Biodiversity Day of 2012 on marine and coastal biodiversity.

The global celebration of International Biodiversity Day on the theme of marine biodiversity will bring unprecedented opportunities to engage political leaderships, senior policy makers, different industries, and various civil society groups in addressing complex challenges to marine biodiversity, further compounded by the threats of climate change and ocean acidification. It will thereby mobilize necessary political, scientific and financial support to bring creative and innovative solutions toward "marine sustainability".

The outcomes of our collective efforts will then be presented at the high level segment of 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties being hosted by India in October 2012 as well as IMPAC 3 being hosted by France in October 2013.

CBD Secretariat would like to invite all of you to join hands together with the Convention Parties and partners to make all these global opportunities meaningful and successful toward achieving our common vision of marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Thank you for your attention!