



STATEMENT

by

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

on the occasion of the

SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

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EXPO Hall, Yeosu, Republic of Korea



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Your Highness,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome distinguished participants to the Sustainable Ocean Initiative High-level Meeting, in the presence of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Your Highness for honouring this important meeting and inspiring participants with Your insights and commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is pleased to collaborate with the Monaco Blue Initiative in view of the Initiative's commitment to various marine biodiversity issues, such as ocean acidification, marine protected areas, and sustainable fisheries.

My warmest thanks also go to the Korea Maritime Institute, the co-organizer of this meeting, for their excellent organization and generous hospitality in welcoming the participants. I also greatly appreciate the French MPA Agency, Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation and Japan Biodiversity Fund for generously sponsoring this meeting. My thanks also go to the Fisheries Expert Group of IUCN as well as the Yeosu EXPO Organizing Committee for their excellent cooperation.

Two weeks ago, on 22 May, 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and various partners celebrated International Day for Biological Diversity, this year on the theme of marine and coastal biodiversity.

Marine and coastal biodiversity is essential to the well-being and livelihoods of many coastal communities, and benefits millions of people who may not think that they rely on the ocean. And yet, fisheries provide over 15 per cent of the animal protein in the global diet. Intact and resilient coastal ecosystems protect inland dwellers from natural disasters occurring on the sea. Substances derived from the sea are key components in many commercial products, such as creams, paints, paper and medicines. Tiny marine plants called phytoplankton release half of all oxygen in the atmosphere.

At the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-10), held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2011, Parties expressed their concern about the slow progress being made in the establishment of marine protected areas, including representative networks, a commitment made by world leaders at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. A decade later, we have reached the target year of 2012, but we have not met our goal. Despite efforts in the last few years, protected areas account for just over 1 per cent of the ocean surface, compared to nearly 15 per cent of protected-area coverage on land.

Also at COP-10, Parties agreed to a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. This Plan and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets include several specific targets relevant to marine and coastal areas. They address issues such as the sustainable harvest of fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants, the establishment of greater levels of protection for coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the need to minimize, by 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification. This commitment of the global community demonstrated that the world is ready to protect marine and coastal ecosystems in the interest of all.

The goals set by the Parties to the Convention are ambitious, and challenges before them are wide-ranging, including the critical need to build capacity and to inform decision-making. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative, also known as SOI, was thus created under the leadership of Japan, President of COP 10, to facilitate the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets most relevant to marine and coastal biodiversity through concerted and innovative efforts in capacity-building and scientific partnerships.

Building upon the initial consultation meeting convened during the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on 24 October 2010, the CBD Secretariat organized, jointly with the UNU-IAS-Operating Unit Ishikawa/Kanazawa, with financial support from the Government of Japan, a Sustainable Ocean Initiative Programme Development Meeting, in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan from 2 to 4 August 2011.

There, meeting participants discussed a long-term programme for SOI and identified short-term priority actions toward the goal of making SOI a long-term capacity-building partnership to facilitate the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets on marine and coastal biodiversity, and effective implementation of the Convention's programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity.

As a follow-up to the Kanazawa meeting, a side event was organized on SOI at the 16th meeting of Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), recently held in Montreal, Canada, where participants discussed potential partnerships that could be built between global and regional partners to address the diverse capacity-development needs in different regions. SOI will also be discussed at the forthcoming UN-Oceans meeting, to be held in Yeosu at the EXPO venue in August 2012, when the results of this meeting will be announced and various UN organizations will be invited to contribute.

The results of this meeting will then be compiled, synthesized and presented at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, being convened in Hyderabad, India, in October 2012. The CBD Secretariat will collaborate with the Secretariat of the Monaco Blue Initiative in synthesizing the results of the two SOI meetings.

Nature protects if she is protected—this is the slogan for the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Indeed, our immediate actions and commitments will shape the future of marine biodiversity and ecosystems around the world and the people around the world who depend on them.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative is a global partnership that will be implemented by global and regional partners that are committed to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Successful partnerships require a common vision, innovative ideas, expertise, knowledge, willingness to work together, and human and financial resources. Each partner in this initiative has at least one of these elements to share, and therefore I believe that the Sustainable Ocean Initiative has a bright future as long as we are willing to work together.

With this, I wish all of you a fruitful discussion and successful meeting conclusion.

Thank you for your attention.
