



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of

**NORTH PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP TO FACILITATE THE DESCRIPTION
OF ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS**

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend my warmest welcome and utmost thanks to all the experts from countries and organizations for participating in the North Pacific regional workshop on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), the fifth regional workshop on EBSAs being convened by the CBD Secretariat.

My sincere thanks go to the Government of Russian Federation for hosting this important workshop. We greatly appreciate their warm welcome and kind hospitality in this historic city of Moscow.

My special thanks also go to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), and the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) as well as the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative for collaborating on the organization of this important workshop. I wish to emphasize the importance of our close collaboration with international and regional partners in successfully implementing the Convention's work on marine and coastal biodiversity.

I wish to acknowledge, with great appreciation, the kind financial support from the Government of Japan, through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, which enabled the convening of this regional workshop and the participation of experts from the region.

Marine ecosystems are essential for the bio-geo-chemical cycles that sustain all life on earth. It is no exaggeration therefore to say all of humanity depends on marine biodiversity. Moreover, hundreds of millions of people rely directly on marine biodiversity for their livelihoods. However, as communities around the world strive to achieve sustainable development, they face multiple challenges due to unprecedented biodiversity loss arising from overfishing, and other unsustainable fishing practices as well as the emerging threats of global-scale climate change. Unfortunately, the oceans are becoming a global repository of the wastes produced by various human activities, and marine biodiversity suffers from myriad threats, ranging from microplastic pollution to ocean acidification.

At Rio+20 meeting, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the global leaders recognized that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it. They stressed the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change. The world then witnessed the commitment of global leaders to protect, and restore, the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity, enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations, and to effectively apply an ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach in the management of activities having an impact on the marine environment, to deliver on all three dimensions of sustainable development.

Likewise, the world leaders reaffirmed the importance of area-based conservation measures, including marine protected areas, as a tool for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components. They noted Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, which states that by 2020, 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are to be conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

In decision X/29 on marine and coastal biodiversity, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity noted that the application of the scientific criteria for the EBSAs presents a tool that Parties and competent intergovernmental organizations may choose to use to progress towards the implementation of ecosystem approaches in marine areas both within and beyond national jurisdiction.

Parties also noted that the application of the EBSA criteria is a scientific and technical exercise, that areas found to meet the 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. Parties emphasized that the identification of EBSAs and the selection of conservation and management measures is a matter for States and competent intergovernmental organizations.

Upon the request of the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting in 2010, the CBD Secretariat has been convening a series of regional workshops to facilitate the description of EBSAs. The results of these workshops in the Western South Pacific region and the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic region were considered by the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. COP 11 then requested the Executive Secretary to submit the summary report of these results to the UN General Assembly and its relevant processes, and requested also to include the results in the CBD EBSA repository. Similarly, the results of this workshop will be also submitted to the future meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice prior to the 12th meeting of the COP.

CBD's EBSA process being undertaken so far since COP10, in partnership with various global and regional partners, has facilitated the sharing of scientific information and data, networking of interdisciplinary experts at regional scale, and collaboration between various regional initiatives for marine conservation and sustainable use by providing a regional platform for scientific assessment on the ecological or biological significance of the marine areas.

Moving toward sustainable ocean can happen only through the building of a shared vision and strong commitments toward conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity. Combined with innovative approaches, such as EBSA process, for linking science with policy development and implementation through multi-stakeholder partnerships, these efforts will ensure a sustainable future for the oceans of the world.

With this, I will conclude my talk. I wish you a successful and fruitful workshop.

Thank you for your attention!