



**Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity,
Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias,**

on the occasion of

***United Nations Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to
Study Issues Relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological
Diversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction, 19 to 23 August 2013, UNHQ, New York***

Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to update the Working Group on relevant work of the Convention.

At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties, addressed a number of issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity. I will focus here on three points: on the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs), on environmental assessments, and on the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources. Other issues addressed by COP-11 included ocean acidification, coral bleaching, marine debris and underwater noise as well as sustainable fisheries.

Regarding EBSAs

As noted by the Conference of the Parties, the application of EBSA criteria is a scientific and technical exercise, while, the identification of EBSAs and the selection of conservation and management measures are matters for States and competent intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with international law, including the Law of the Sea.

Since November 2011, the CBD Secretariat has convened six regional workshops to facilitate the description of areas meeting the scientific criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in line with CBD decisions X/29 and XI/17. The Secretariat has been also collaborating with relevant on-going processes being convened by regional organizations in the North East Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

So far, experts from 92 countries and 79 organizations have participated in the six CBD workshops.

The Conference of the Parties considered the results of the first two workshops, in the Western South Pacific region and in the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic region, at its eleventh meeting and adopted decision XI/17. Pursuant to that decision, the summary reports on the description of areas that meet the EBSA criteria, prepared by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) at its 16th meeting, were submitted to the General Assembly and its relevant Working Groups including this Working Group, by means of a Letter from the CBD Executive Secretary to the Secretary-General. This document is now available as document A/67/838 in the Official Document System of the United Nations, in all six official languages (http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/838).



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The results of the other workshops will be submitted for consideration to SBSTTA-18 scheduled for June 2014, and by the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties scheduled for October 2014.

The Secretariat is currently collaborating with various Parties and relevant organizations to organize workshops for the remaining regions, as requested by the Conference of the Parties.

Key results of these regional workshops were presented at the inter-sessional workshop of this Working Group in May this year through the Secretariat's participation as a panel member. Information will also be presented at a side event at lunch-time tomorrow, Tuesday to which you are all invited.

Regarding environmental assessments.

Also at its eleventh session, the Conference of the Parties took note, in decision XI/18, of the voluntary guidelines for the consideration of biodiversity in environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments annotated specifically for biodiversity in marine and coastal areas, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in accordance with Article 4 of the CBD and encouraged, as appropriate, Parties, other Governments and competent organizations, in accordance with national and international law, including the Law of the Sea, to use the voluntary guidelines and to adapt and apply them as may be considered necessary.

Regarding the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2010. At the same meeting, in Aichi Biodiversity Target 16, Parties called for the Nagoya Protocol to be operational by 2015. In April this year, the Secretary General wrote to all Heads of State and Government urging early ratification so that the Nagoya Protocol can enter into force and the international community can move to the implementation phase.

Ninety-two Parties to the Convention had signed the Protocol at the closure of signature in February 2012, and 19 Parties have thus far deposited their instrument of ratification, namely, Albania, Botswana, Comoros, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Honduras, India, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Panama, Rwanda, Syrian Arab Republic], the Seychelles and South Africa.

With over one-third of the 50 ratifications required for the Protocol to enter into force, and a number of other countries in the process of finalizing their national procedures, the momentum is there for the Protocol to enter into force in time for the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to take place in October 2014 in conjunction with COP-12 in Pyeongyang, Republic of Korea.

As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 67/212, the Executive Secretary is making arrangements for a special event during the Second Committee of the sixty-eighth session, on the implementation of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, including actions undertaken to promote access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization and associated traditional knowledge.

Finally, let me assure you that the CBD Secretariat is ready to work closely with States and relevant organizations to ensure that the best available scientific information on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction can be provided for consideration during your deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.