



**Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity,
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
(1 – 4 April 2014, UNHQ, New York)***

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, I am pleased to have this opportunity to update the meeting on the CBD's scientific and technical work on marine and coastal biodiversity relevant to the issues under consideration by the Working Group.

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), addressing threats to marine biodiversity such as ocean acidification, coral bleaching, marine debris and anthropogenic underwater noise, and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization.

Application of EBSA Criteria

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, since its eighth meeting in 2006 and its subsequent meetings until 11th meeting in 2012, has reiterated its recognition that the Convention on Biological Diversity has a key role in supporting the work of the General Assembly with regard to marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction, by focusing on provision of scientific and, as appropriate, technical information and advice relating to marine biological diversity, the application of the ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach.

The Conference of the Parties, at its tenth meeting and in decision X/29, noted that the application of the scientific criteria for the identification of ecologically and biologically significant areas (EBSAs) presents a tool which Parties and competent intergovernmental organizations may choose to use to progress towards the implementation of ecosystem approaches in relation to areas both within and beyond national jurisdiction, through the identification of areas and features of the marine environment that are important for conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity

COP 10 also noted that the application of the 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 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.



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Since November 2011, the CBD Secretariat has convened eight regional workshops, to facilitate the description of areas meeting the EBSA criteria, pursuant to requests in CBD decisions X/29 and XI/17. The Secretariat will convene additional regional workshops for the Mediterranean Sea next week, in Málaga, Spain, and for other remaining regions in early next year. These eight regional workshops covered about 78% of world ocean areas and involved about 101 countries and 96 organizations with some attending more than one workshop,

The Conference of the Parties, at its eleventh meeting, considered the summary report on the results of the first two workshops, in the Western South Pacific region and in the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic region, and upon the request of COP at this meeting, the summary report was submitted to UNGA and its relevant processes, and made available as UNGA document A/67/838. The results of the other seven workshops will be submitted for consideration to forthcoming eighteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in June 2014, and the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in October 2014.

In order to facilitate information-sharing of experiences of applying EBSA criteria among different regions, CBD Secretariat is currently developing a portal Website for EBSA, which is linked to global EBSA repository, pursuant to COP requests in its decisions X/29 and XI/17. Official launching of this website will take place at the forthcoming 18th meeting of SBSTTA in June.

For further details on the results of EBSA regional workshops, I wish to invite all of distinguished delegates to today's lunch time side event being convened by CBD Secretariat on the theme of "CBD's Scientific Work relating to the Application of the Ecosystem Approach in the context of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas". At this Side Event, you will also have a chance to view the current development of EBSA portal website.

Threats to Marine Biodiversity

Among many issues being addressed under the Convention, I will report on the recent scientific work on the impacts of ocean acidification and anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, including the biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Pursuant to COP requests in decision X/18, the Secretariat has prepared, with the assistance of a team of international experts and supported by the United Kingdom, a draft updated synthesis of the impacts of ocean acidification on marine biodiversity, building on a previous CBD synthesis on this issue.

Likewise, the Secretariat convened, with financial support from the European Commission, an Expert Workshop on Underwater Noise and its Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization, London, in 25-27 February 2014. The workshop addressed, in particular, improving and sharing knowledge on the impacts of underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, and practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic noise.

The results of these expert processes will be submitted for consideration to the forthcoming 18th meeting of SBSTTA, prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing

29 countries have now ratified or acceded to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization. This is an additional 10 ratifications/accessions since our update at the previous meeting of this Working Group in August 2013. A further 21 ratifications or accessions are required for the Protocol to enter into force and we are aware that many countries are in the final stages of their domestic processes towards ratification.

The third meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol was held in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea in February 2014 and agreed to a number of recommendations. Among these was a recommendation regarding a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism, which, according to Article 10 of the Protocol, would address benefit-sharing from the utilization of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources that occur in transboundary situations or for which it is not possible to grant or obtain prior informed consent. The recommendation – which will be considered by the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at their first meeting – sets out a roadmap that will enable the Parties to unravel the complexities of such a mechanism, which is related to genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The pilot phase of the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House was also launched in February of this year. The ABS Clearing-House is a platform for exchanging information on ABS and is a key tool for facilitating the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol by helping to enhance transparency and create legal certainty.

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.