



STATEMENT BY

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of

THE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE (SOI) NATIONAL CAPACITY-DEVELOPMENT

WORKSHOP FOR SAMOA

Apia, Samoa

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa. Manuia le taeao.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Samoa for hosting the Sustainable Ocean Initiative National Capacity-development Workshop in Apia. My special thanks go to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment for their great support and warm hospitality, as well as to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation for providing valuable inputs in preparation for the workshop. I would also like to acknowledge, with great appreciation, the financial contribution of the Republic of Korea, through the EXPO 2012 Yeosu Korea Foundation, to support the organization of this workshop.

There could not be a more appropriate place than the beautiful island nation of Samoa to discuss the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and its importance for sustainable development. Samoa's intimate connection with the sea underpins its health, prosperity and well-being. Samoa is indeed a large ocean state, and its critical role in stewardship of a vast area of the ocean must be recognized and supported. Samoa's close connection with the sea reminds us all that we are not simply dependent on the ocean for its resources and services, but that we are, in fact, one with the ocean — our fates intimately intertwined.

It is this recognition and understanding of importance of the ocean's biodiversity and ecosystems to sustainable development that is at the core of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. These targets, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010, lay out an ambitious agenda for achieving a future where ecosystems are able to provide critical services that underpin planetary well-being, and where the global community can sustainably and equitably benefit from biodiversity without impacting the ability of future generations to do so.

Parties to the CBD have also acknowledged the major challenges they face to achieving these Targets, including governance issues and a limited information base, and the need for enhanced institutional, technical, managerial and scientific capacity. In this regard, the Conference of the Parties to the CBD has reiterated calls for enhanced training and capacity development for marine and coastal biodiversity. As well, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, emanating from the recent Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, also outlines the critical need for capacity- development efforts to enhance progress towards major goals for sustainable development.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative, or SOI, which is coordinated by the CBD Secretariat, aims to address these calls and respond to the urgent need for capacity development. SOI is a global partnership platform focused on facilitating information-sharing and learning from experience across sectors, improving the scientific basis for implementation and creating partnerships that can provide for targeted capacity-building, training, technical assistance and learning exchange. In doing so, SOI aims to enhance the capacity of countries to achieve the Aichi Targets, building on the commitments of CBD Parties, the CBD's work on marine biodiversity and the many relevant experiences and activities of partners around the world. It aims to package and deliver, in an integrated and holistic manner, the wide range of resources, knowledge and initiatives present in different forms and at different levels around the world in order to meet regional and national priorities for capacity-building.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, launched in October 2014 at 12th meeting of the COP, found significant progress towards meeting some components of the majority of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. However, despite the dramatic increase in responses by Parties, indicators suggest that the status of biodiversity will continue to decline without urgent action. Reversing these trends will not be possible without concerted and coordinated actions by all sectors and stakeholders, as well as a strategic focus on capacity development to create the enabling conditions needed to achieve the Aichi Targets.

As such, it is important to enhance dialogue and coordination across different sectors and stakeholder groups to build a common understanding and vision of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and ecosystems, and of how marine biodiversity and ecosystems are valued in different ways and how these values contribute to different priorities.

Our meeting this week will build on existing work in the region to enhance our understanding of the values of Samoa's marine biodiversity and ecosystems and the pressures facing these values, and discuss means to integrate this understanding into integrated planning and management, including through tools such as the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, marine spatial planning and the application of biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessments.

Efforts such as these will contribute to enhanced implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 14, which is focused on conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

I also want to emphasize that your role in working to achieve the vision of SOI extends well beyond this week. We hope that you will integrate the tools and knowledge gained at this workshop into your respective activities at the regional, national and sub-national levels. We especially hope that this workshop will support Samoa's participation in the forthcoming SOI Regional Capacity-development Workshop for the South Pacific, to take place in 2016. Furthermore, we will continue to communicate with you in years to come so that stakeholders and participants in SOI activities in other parts of the world can learn from your experiences.

With this, I wish you a successful and fruitful workshop.

Fa'afetai.