



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of

THE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

WORKSHOP FOR NAMIBIA

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Namibia for hosting the Sustainable Ocean Initiative National Workshop for Namibia in Swakopmund. My special thanks go to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism for hosting the workshop, and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources for providing valuable technical support in jointly developing the workshop programme as well as the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Ministry of Works and Transport for participating in the workshop to share their experience and expertise. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the resource speakers who came from different parts of the world to participate in this workshop. I would like to acknowledge, with great appreciation, the financial contribution of the Government of the Republic of Korea, through the EXPO 2010 Yeosu Korea Foundation, and that of the Government of Germany, through the BCC-GIZ Benguela Current Marine Spatial Management and Governance Project, for the organization of this workshop.

It is a great pleasure to return to Swakopmund, where the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) convened the South-Eastern Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) in April 2013. In Swakopmund, we witness the impressive diversity of Namibia's environmental features, ranging from vast dryland areas with extremely high species richness and endemism to the Atlantic Ocean with abundant marine resources and diversity. The marine environment in Namibia is characterized by the cold Benguela Current ecosystem, which produces a nutrient-rich upwelling system that supports some of the highest concentrations of marine life in the world.

Biodiversity and the natural environment are of critical importance to Namibia. The Constitution of Namibia makes reference to the country's obligation to maintain and promote essential ecological processes as well as biodiversity for the welfare of its people and future generations. I also wish to highlight that sectors based on natural resources, such as fisheries, agriculture, mining and tourism, are essential to the Namibian economy, and about 70 per cent of the population is directly dependent on the natural resource base for income, food, medicinal and health needs, fuel and shelter. This situation demands that biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides are maintained and enhanced as far as possible for sustainable development.

The understanding that biological diversity underpins ecosystem functioning and the provision of ecosystem services that are essential for human well-being is also at the core of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. These targets, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010, lay out an ambitious agenda for achieving a future in which ecosystems contribute to local livelihoods and economic development, and in which the global community can sustainably and equitably benefit from biodiversity without impacting the ability of future generations to do so.

Parties to the Convention have also acknowledged the major challenges they face in achieving these targets, including governance issues, limited information base, and the need for enhanced institutional, technical, managerial and scientific capacity. In this regard, the Conference of the Parties has reiterated calls for enhanced training and capacity development for marine and coastal biodiversity since its tenth meeting, in 2010.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative, or SOI, was established in 2010 on the sidelines of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at the same time as the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As such, SOI aligns its vision with that of the Strategic Plan. The SOI programme has been developed to address various Aichi Targets

related to marine and coastal biodiversity, with a particular focus on targets 6 (sustainable fisheries), 10 (addressing multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems), and 11 (marine and coastal protected areas). SOI, which is being coordinated by the CBD Secretariat, is aimed at responding to the urgent need for capacity development by providing a global partnership platform focused on facilitating information-sharing and learning exchanges across sectors, improving the scientific basis for implementation, and providing opportunities for targeted training and technical assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

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

In view of this, 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. Our meeting this week will aim to enhance our understanding of the relationship between the environmental and socio-economic value of Namibia's marine biodiversity and resources, and the potential impacts of commodity mining activities on the identified values. We will then discuss ways and means to incorporate this understanding into the application of integrated planning and management tools to further strengthen existing national efforts towards the long-term sustainable development of marine resources in Namibia and the conservation of its marine biodiversity. Experiences from Namibia and from different parts of the world will be shared on the application of biodiversity-inclusive impact assessments as well as marine spatial planning. This workshop will therefore contribute to enhanced implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals recently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, including Goal 14 on conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Sustainable oceans can be achieved only by building a shared vision and strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity. Combined with innovative approaches for linking science with policy development and implementation through multi-stakeholder partnerships, these efforts should ensure a sustainable future for the oceans of the world. I would also like to emphasize that your active participation in the vision of sustainable oceans extends well beyond this week. We hope that you will take the tools and knowledge gained at this workshop, and integrate them into your respective management and scientific activities at the regional, national and subnational levels. 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 experience.

With this, I wish you a productive discussion and a fruitful learning exchange in the coming days. Again, I encourage all of you to share the vision and mission of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative and contribute to a sustainable future for our oceans for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.
