



STATEMENT

OF

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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON MONITORING OF MARINE AND
COASTAL BIODIVERSITY**

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**Convention on
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Distinguished delegates and experts,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this Technical Workshop on Monitoring of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, being held on the margins of the twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. Having this kind of technical workshops in connection with the SBSTTA meeting has become common practice, and they aim to bring together scientists and delegates in CBD meetings. As such, I am pleased to see many delegates from CBD Parties and representatives from international organizations and various partners as well as experts from Future Earth, the Quebec Centre for Biodiversity Science and local universities.

I would like to extend to my sincere thanks to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission-UNESCO, and the Marine Biodiversity Observation Network of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEOBON) for their collaboration in organizing this workshop, and to the many other partners here with us today for providing valuable technical input. In particular, I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of financial resources by the GOOS-IOC-UNESCO and the CSIRO for organizing this meeting.

As we gather here in Montreal to discuss progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the deadlines for which are fast approaching, we see the need for accelerated efforts to achieve these targets in marine and coastal areas, including Target 6 on sustainable fisheries, Target 8 on pollution, Target 10 on coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems, Target 11 on protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and Target 12 on threatened species.

However, in order to make progress towards these targets, we need a clear picture of status and trends in biodiversity and a basis to understand the effectiveness of our interventions. It is in this regard that monitoring is such as an important element of our common efforts for achieving the Aichi Targets, a role that has been repeatedly acknowledged by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular, COP has highlighted monitoring to support marine spatial planning, to improve the basis for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and to improve knowledge of key processes and influences on the marine and coastal ecosystems.

CBD's work on marine and coastal biodiversity addresses a range of scientific and technical elements of conservation and sustainable use, each of which support and depend on monitoring in various ways. Work under CBD on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) provides a basis for long-term monitoring in addition to the work developed under the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) and to the work being developed under the coordination of the United Nations Statistics Division for the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets. Pressures on marine biodiversity, such as unsustainable fishing practices, ocean acidification, marine debris and underwater noise, need to be closely monitored to understand how various stressors affect marine biodiversity, both individually and in combination. Work on tools and approaches, such as marine spatial planning and impact assessments, relies on robust monitoring as a key element of adaptive management and the ecosystem approach. Capacity-building work under the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) aims

to build synergies with efforts to enhance technical skills for monitoring as a key enabling factor in conservation and sustainable use.

The wide range of monitoring activities and initiatives on global or regional scales, some of which are represented here at this workshop, is illustrative of the importance of robust research and monitoring activities to provide a foundation for planning and management. There is a great opportunity to maximize the impact of these efforts through enhanced coordination and knowledge-sharing and also through engagement with the various relevant intergovernmental processes at the global level, including the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the World Ocean Assessment, and in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We must also be cognizant of the wide range of experiences, challenges and needs related to monitoring in different parts of the world. The enormous diversity of the features of the oceans necessitates appropriate types of research and monitoring approaches and sharing of information. Similarly the enormous range of perspectives, priorities and capacities also calls for flexible approaches to monitoring and sharing of experiences. We should recognize this diversity as a unique opportunity to broaden our perspectives and tailor our efforts to best support the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the context of sustainable development objectives.

We know that we will never have perfect information, and that we must act using our best scientific judgement and available information, but we must also strive to fill knowledge gaps and build the information base as best we can.

I urge you all to make use of this workshop as an opportunity to consider how to not only advance and improve approaches to monitoring but, more importantly, to consider how your work can best support our common goals for healthy and sustainable oceans.

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

Thank you for your attention.
