



STATEMENT

OF

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

**SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE GLOBAL DIALOGUE WITH REGIONAL SEAS
ORGANIZATIONS AND REGIONAL FISHERIES BODIES ON ACCELERATING PROGRESS
TOWARDS THE AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS**

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SEOUL



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

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Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to open this important meeting, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The meeting is being jointly convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Government of the Republic of Korea in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries for hosting this meeting and for supporting the Secretariat in its efforts to bring this important initiative to fruition. Since 2012, the Secretariat of the Convention has closely collaborated with the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, in particular through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative. I am very happy to inform you that the Secretariat of the Convention and the Ministry will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding on this occasion to further strengthen our collaboration.

I would also like to thank the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as well as many other partner organizations, for their technical support in the organization of this meeting. My sincere thanks also go to the Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, the Korea Maritime Institute, and the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation for providing all the necessary technical and logistical support. I also wish to acknowledge with deepest gratitude to the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund) and to the European Commission for providing the financial resources that have allowed the participation of various representatives in this meeting.

I would also like to thank all of you, including representatives of the various regional and international organizations, who have gathered here to engage in focused and forward-looking discussions to identify opportunities to accelerate progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have gathered here from all over the world, from different regions with different backgrounds and interests, under a common goal: sustainable, productive and healthy oceans. The scientific evidence is clear that, if we ever hope to achieve sustainable development, we must ensure that biodiversity and ecosystems are healthy and resilient. The oceans provide innumerable goods and services for humanity. They provide nutritious food, they support livelihoods and they help to keep the planet habitable. Their protection is a precondition to eliminating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

These critical linkages between biodiversity, ecosystems and sustainable development are at the core of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Strategic Plan, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010, and since supported by the other biodiversity-related conventions and the United Nations General Assembly, sets out a vision whereby biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and widely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering essential services for all people. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets constitute an ambitious agenda to realize this vision.

The same sentiments are clearly reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14, which further echoes and reiterates the many ocean-related elements agreed to by countries under the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The ambition of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals necessitates action at multiple scales, including the regional scale. Regional organizations provide a critical link between global-level commitments and national-level implementation. They are crucial partners in helping to create the enabling conditions for successful and sustainable implementation, in accelerating and monitoring progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals. Their role has been acknowledged by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,

which has encouraged further cooperation and collaboration among the regional bodies to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Regional bodies have made important steps in different parts of the world with regard to conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity. However, the enormity of pressures on ecosystems and drivers of biodiversity loss calls for expanded and accelerated action. The contexts, challenges, experiences and perspectives differ among regions, and this diversity provides a wealth of knowledge and lessons to be learned. We are here this week to learn from this range of knowledge, experiences and approaches, to consider how to improve our ways of working together and to identify tangible opportunities for regional-scale collaboration in support of our respective mandates.

At the global level, we see renewed momentum in addressing oceanic issues: oceans have their own goal in the Sustainable Development Goals and next year's United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 will take this forward. The Paris Agreement on climate change recognizes the importance of oceans. The ongoing process in New York to negotiate a new international instrument for marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction is gathering pace. And the Ballast Water Management Convention of the International Maritime Organization is now set to enter into force. This is an opportune time to better understand and clarify the role of regional organizations in the global oceanscape.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This meeting is also a valuable opportunity to further promote the integration of biodiversity and fisheries at the regional scale. The range of organizations represented here address biodiversity and fisheries issues in different ways. In this regard, we must be cognizant of the complementary and convergent nature of objectives related to sustainable fisheries and biodiversity, and the need to improve cross-sectoral implementation based on this understanding. Biodiversity objectives can only be met if pressure from fishing is sustainable, and objectives for productive fisheries can only be met if the ecosystems that support the fish stocks are healthy and resilient.

The forthcoming thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention will focus on mainstreaming biodiversity into different sectors, including fisheries. It also provides an important opportunity to highlight and build on collaboration between the regional seas organizations and the regional fishery bodies as well as between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The high-level ministerial segment of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, hosted by Mexico, will aim to build political will for biodiversity mainstreaming in order to enhance progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and outline strategic actions needed to improve implementation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The dialogue this week represents a valuable opportunity for sharing, learning and building connections, both within and across regions. I hope that this meeting can be the meaningful start of an ongoing initiative for promoting concrete progress in achieving our global targets and goals, and safeguard the sustainability of the oceans so that they can continue to nurture life everywhere on Earth as an essential part of the future we want.

Thank you for your attention.
