



**Statement by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
on behalf of the Executive Secretary**

**Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14**

New York, United States of America, 15-16 February 2017

Distinguished delegates,

Sustainable development can only become a reality when biodiversity and ecosystems are healthy and resilient. Without addressing the critical linkage between ecosystems and sustainable development, our collective efforts will be in vain. Since 2010, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets have provided an effective framework for cooperation to achieve a future in which the global community can sustainably and equitably benefit from biodiversity without impacting the ability of future generations to do so. Our efforts at different scales to achieve the Aichi Targets will therefore directly contribute to achieving various Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 14. In fact, Sustainable Development Goal 14 directly builds on and aligns with the commitments agreed to under the Aichi Biodiversity Targets relating to marine and coastal biodiversity.

In this vein, ministers and heads of delegations at the high-level segment of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, held in Cancun in December 2016, expressed their commitment, through the adoption of the Cancun Declaration, to working at all levels within governments and across sectors to mainstream biodiversity in sectoral development. Committed ministers and heads of delegation agreed to incorporate biodiversity values into national accounting and reporting systems, strengthen institutional support and capacities for biodiversity mainstreaming, and ensure that sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, plans and programmes integrate the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

In support of the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in their efforts to strengthen the critical linkage between biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, the Secretariat has also been working closely with FAO and UN Environment, with the support of the Governments of the Republic of Korea and Japan, and the European Commission, together with various global and regional organizations, to facilitate cross-sectoral regional-scale dialogue and coordination. In particular, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi



Biodiversity Targets, was convened in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in September 2016. This global dialogue was noted with appreciation by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 71/257 on oceans and the law of the sea. The global dialogue, which will become a regular forum, will help to strengthen existing collaboration among regional bodies, and thereby enhance support for national efforts to achieve the Aichi Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Distinguished delegates,

Understanding the ecological and biological values of the ocean is the first step in the right direction towards achieving sustainable development. In this regard, the Secretariat of the Convention has facilitated the global process of describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas or EBSAs, together with Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations. Since 2011, a total of 279 EBSAs have been described by 12 regional workshops which have covered more than 70 per cent of the world oceans, both within and beyond national jurisdiction. As emphasized by the Conference of the Parties, the application of the EBSA criteria is a scientific and technical exercise, and areas meeting the EBSA criteria may require enhanced conservation and management, which can be achieved through a variety of means, including marine protected areas and impact assessments.

This enhanced scientific understanding of ocean areas, therefore, provides a robust scientific foundation for governments to address key pressures on marine biodiversity, such as ocean acidification, anthropogenic underwater noise and marine debris. The Secretariat of the Convention is working continuously to support Parties in applying cross-sectoral and integrated planning tools, such as marine spatial planning and impact assessments, in addressing the interactions between human activities and critical ecosystem components and processes.

Distinguished delegates

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets represent a landmark political achievement, catalysing an enormous amount of support, political will, and investment, thereby advancing the sustainable development paradigm. Likewise, efforts to achieve the Aichi Targets have advanced tools and approaches for conservation and sustainable use, and have demonstrated clear positive impacts. Sustainable Development Goal 14 provides a critical opportunity to utilize and build on the political will, commitments and experience gained through progress towards the Aichi Targets in marine and coastal areas.

The Secretariat of the Convention is working to consolidate the achievements made thus far in this respect, together with relevant Parties, other Governments, partner organizations and various stakeholders, in order to share these experiences and lessons learned at the forthcoming Ocean Conference in June. The Secretariat is ready to provide any further information to support your deliberations and welcomes any suggestions for collaboration towards the successful outcomes of this Conference.
