



**STATEMENT BY**

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**of the**

**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**at the opening of**

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

**Seoul, Republic of Korea**

**10-13 April 2018**



*Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It is my great pleasure to address this second meeting of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress Towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I offer my sincere thanks to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for once again hosting this important meeting in the beautiful city of Seoul, and to the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea for providing the technical and logistical support needed to organize this meeting.

I would like to extend my appreciation to UN Environment, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and many other partner organizations for their collaboration and contributions to the SOI Global Dialogue. I would also like to acknowledge the financial support from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund), the Government of Sweden and the European Union, which has made this meeting possible.

And, finally, I would like to thank all of the representatives and experts from various global and regional bodies, governments and organizations who have come to lend your knowledge and experiences to enrich this ongoing dialogue, and to identify ways to complement and enhance each other's work in accelerating the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Two years ago, many of us gathered here in Seoul for the first SOI Global Dialogue, the first meeting of its kind at the global level to bring together regional seas organizations and regional fisheries bodies. We came from many different regions with different backgrounds and interests, but all under a common goal: sustainable, productive and healthy oceans.

The results of our first meeting, consolidated as the "Seoul Outcome," became an important step for the global community, welcomed in many different global forums, including the United Nations Ocean Conference, and recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in its 2016 and 2017 resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea. The Seoul Outcome captured the opportunities and bright outlook for cross-sectoral regional approaches, as well as our collective vision for working together in this path for sustainability. In particular, it highlighted:

- The need for improved regional cooperation and collaboration, supported by exchange of information and lessons, and exploring of shared objectives and issues of common interest;
- The need for regional cooperation to be underpinned by national-level coordination;
- That regional cooperation can be enhanced through regional-level strategies, harmonized data collection and exchange, and by promoting mutual understanding and trust among regional organizations;
- Importantly, that we must continue these global dialogues to identify ways to further strengthen regional-scale collaboration and cooperation.

As the days pass and the deadlines for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals get closer and closer, we must urgently build on the strong foundation of the SOI Global Dialogue. And, just as none of the Aichi Targets or the Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved in isolation, regional fishery bodies and regional seas organizations are intrinsically dependent on one another to fully achieve their goals and mandates. And, while some regional bodies have made important steps to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration with other bodies, we must keep in mind that there is one interlinked and interdependent ocean. An ocean that connects all regions and that is impacted by our successes as well as our shortcomings.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

The theme of this meeting is “Unlocking the potential for transformational change towards sustainability.” All of the signs and indicators tell us that our current ways of doing things are unsustainable and that our piecemeal efforts are simply not enough to put us on the right path. The pathways towards a sustainable future require transformational change, including changes in behaviour at the levels of producers and consumers, governments and businesses. Disruptive societal and technological developments are already under way at all levels. We need to capitalize on these developments to ensure that they lead to a sustainable future.

We have accumulated a significant amount of tools, knowledge and experiences in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. However, we are, so to speak, too “committed” to our current systems, assumptions and behaviours. We need to challenge ourselves and identify ways in which we can better face transitions head on and make the positive changes needed for us to be able to live in harmony with nature.

This is a critical time for the global biodiversity community. As we near the 2020 deadline for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, we must take a hard look at our successes and failures. The forthcoming United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Egypt in November will adopt a decision launching the process for a new global biodiversity framework. I invite you to contribute to these discussions to share your different perspectives, knowledge and experiences, which will be instrumental in helping to shape this framework.

The dialogue this week represents a valuable opportunity for sharing, learning and building connections, both within and across regions. I hope that this meeting will be a meaningful next step in promoting concrete progress in achieving our global targets and goals, and safeguarding the sustainability of the oceans so that they can continue to nurture life everywhere on Earth.

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

Thank you for your attention.

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