



**STATEMENT BY  
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ACTING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
of the  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
at the opening of the  
Thematic Workshop on Area-Based Conservation Measures  
La Prairie, Canada  
1-3 December 2019**

Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you all to this important thematic workshop on providing specific and practical inputs on goals/targets/sub-targets with baselines and relevant indicators on area-based conservation measures (ABCMs) to the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group for consideration in their work on the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

The world is presently reeling under a severe biodiversity crisis. Extinction rates are estimated to be 1,000 times the background rate, and future rates could be 10,000 times higher. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reports that 75 per cent of the Earth's land surface is significantly altered, 66 per cent of the ocean area is experiencing increasing cumulative impacts, and over 85 per cent of wetland areas have been lost. On average, population sizes of wild vertebrate species have declined precipitously over the last 50 years on land, in freshwater and in the sea, and approximately 25 per cent of species in assessed animal and plant groups are threatened.

The recent IPBES report sounded the clarion call and unequivocally reiterated that the most significant direct drivers of biodiversity loss are habitat loss and fragmentation and direct over-exploitation in both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Factors of climate change, invasive alien species, disease and pollution are also important. Many of these drivers of biodiversity loss can be managed through area-based conservation measures.

Setting global priorities for what biodiversity to conserve and where requires us to think about the world we want, a world in which most of the world's lands and waters function as diverse, resilient ecosystems. Achieving the Convention's 2050 Vision will require, among other things, a broad range of area-based conservation measures, a mosaic of land and sea uses that will include protected areas but also other areas, under a range of governance and management regimes that deliver effective long-term biodiversity outcomes, including territories and areas managed by indigenous peoples and local communities (indigenous and community conserved areas, or ICCAs).

Ladies and gentlemen,

In setting targets to reach the 2050 Vision, we can learn much from our experience in implementing the Aichi Biodiversity. Aichi Target 11 has been successful in increasing the area under conservation regimes, and defining criteria for other effective area-based conservation measures, but there is much that still needs to be done to ensure that protected and conserved areas are well managed, connected,

representative and support essential ecosystem services in order to achieve effective biodiversity conservation. It is clear that the area-based percentage targets under Aichi Target 11 have been helpful in encouraging countries to expand protected area networks. We now need to consider what kind of target we want to set for 2030.

Currently, 15 per cent of land areas and almost 8 per cent of the ocean is under designated protected areas (UNEP-WCMC, 2019a) and the most recent assessments show that about 40 to 50 per cent of the ocean and land are still in relatively intact condition.

The quantitative elements of Target 11 are nearing achievement and are likely to be surpassed by 2020. Reporting existing other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) would further increase coverage and provide us with important baseline information for post-2020. But, we need an emphasis on quality. We need better ecological representation. We need increased emphasis on areas that are important for biodiversity and critical ecosystem services. We need improved management effectiveness, equity, conservation outcomes, and a focus on connectivity and integration into wider landscapes and seascapes.

My colleagues and other experts will provide additional details on the status of Aichi Target 11.

As we seek to develop new targets, we also need to agree on how best to link biodiversity conservation to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals, the objectives of other conventions, and to the provision of nature-based solutions to global challenges, such as climate change and water and food security. The scope and ambition for new targets on area-based conservation should include efforts to improve and sustainably manage production areas in surrounding land- and seascapes to stop and reverse the loss and degradation of natural ecosystems and habitats.

Even with bold targets for area-based conservation measures, there will be a need for greater emphasis on more sustainable use and better integration and mainstreaming of biodiversity in the wider landscape and seascape to ensure connectivity and resilience. Integration is especially essential when considering coastal areas, inland waters and other wetlands.

Targets for area-based conservation will be an important element of the efforts to meet the 2050 Vision. These targets should also link to other potential targets relevant to restoration, such as providing critical ecosystem services to people, status of species, overexploitation and climate change.

I trust that the workshop will address such issues and provide practical suggestions for the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group.

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

Thank you.

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