



STATEMENT BY

MR. BRAULIO F. DE SOUZA DIAS

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

at the opening of

SUSTAINABLE OCEAN INITIATIVE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

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**Convention on
Biological Diversity**

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800, Montreal, QC, H2Y 1N9, Canada
Tel : +1 514 288 2220 Fax : +1 514 288 6588
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



Excellency, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Republic of Korea for hosting this important meeting and to the people of Korea for their warmth and hospitality in welcoming us to their beautiful country. My special thanks go to the Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries for sponsoring, and the Korea Maritime Institute for co-organizing this meeting in close collaboration with the CBD Secretariat. I would also like to thank the government of Japan and the government of France for their commitment and support to the Sustainable Ocean Initiative since its inception in 2010.

The Republic of Korea has kept its history and tradition at its core, while looking to the future and evolving with changing times. Similarly, we must take a forward-looking approach to addressing global biodiversity issues, while learning from the past and taking stock of where we have been.

We have gathered here today under a shared vision of a better future for our oceans. A future where healthy marine ecosystems are able to provide critical services that underpin planetary well-being; A future where the global community can sustainably and equitably benefit from the resources of the oceans without impacting the ability of future generations to do so; A future where the oceans are looked to as a strategic natural capital for sustainable economic growth, rather than just a pool of resources to be exploited. This future is not beyond our reach. We have the tools and resources needed to achieve it.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative seeks to mobilize those tools and resources by catalyzing partnerships and enhancing collaboration to support countries in their commitments to conserve and sustainably use marine and coastal biodiversity as embodied in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative was established in 2010 at the same time as the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As such, Sustainable Ocean Initiative aligns its vision with that of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020:

"Living in Harmony with Nature" where "By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people."

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative supports CBD Parties and partner organizations in achieving this vision by providing a framework for cooperation to enhance cross-sectoral linkages, build on lessons learned, and facilitate improved coordination and interactive dialogue to address major capacity needs.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020 and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets lay out an ambitious yet feasible agenda to reverse the trends of biodiversity loss. They commit countries to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity, safeguard ecosystems, species and genetic diversity, enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services, and enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

Doing so, however, will require concerted and coordinated actions by all sectors and stakeholders. It will require us to abandon business-as-usual approaches and mainstream biodiversity into our development planning, governance and decision-making. And, it will require that we mobilize the resources needed to address key capacity gaps that prevent many from taking the steps needed to achieve these goals.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative provides a key opportunity to address these capacity gaps by building partnerships that can provide for targeted capacity building, training, technical assistance and learning exchange. I encourage you all to share the vision and mission of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative and contribute to a sustainable future for our oceans for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.