



STATEMENT BY
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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE WESTERN SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL WORKSHOP
TO FACILITATE THE DESCRIPTION OF
ECOLOGICALLY OR BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT MARINE AREAS

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Life in harmony, into the future
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COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all the participants and express our greatest thanks for participating in this important workshop, which will be the first regional workshop on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, being convened by the CBD Secretariat.

I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) for successfully hosting this workshop, in close collaboration with the CBD Secretariat.

I wish to acknowledge, with great appreciation, the kind financial support from Japan Biodiversity Fund, which enabled the convening of this regional workshop and inviting experts from developing countries.

Our special thanks also go to the Government of Australia and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) for providing excellent scientific and technical support to the CBD Secretariat in preparing the workshop background document and compiling relevant scientific information, as inputs to the workshop deliberation.

In Nagoya, October last year, the Conference of Parties to the Convention, at its tenth meeting, adopted a new ten year Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the next decade. The Strategic Plan for 2011-2020 presents 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including Target 11, for which 193 Parties are committed, ***“By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.*”**

In decision X/29 on marine and coastal biodiversity, the Parties to the Convention noted with concern the slow progress towards achieving the 2012 target of establishment of marine protected areas, including representative networks. Parties highlighted that despite efforts in the last few years, just over 1 per cent of the ocean surface is designated as protected areas, compared to nearly 15 per cent of protected-area coverage on land.

Parties noted that the application of the scientific criteria for the identification of ecologically and biologically significant areas presents a tool which Parties and competent intergovernmental organizations may choose to use to progress towards the implementation of ecosystem approaches in relation to areas both within and beyond national jurisdiction, through the identification of areas and features of the marine environment that are important for conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity.

Parties also noted that the application of the ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) criteria is a scientific and technical exercise, that areas found to meet the criteria may require enhanced conservation and management measures, and that this can be achieved through a variety of means, including marine protected areas and impact assessments.

Parties emphasized that the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas and the selection of conservation and management measures is a matter for States and competent intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Upon the request of the Conference of the Parties at its tenth meeting in Nagoya, CBD Secretariat is currently convening a series of regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, and we are very happy to begin this important long-term global process from this Western South Pacific region, which has demonstrated a global leadership and commitments toward achieving marine conservation goals. The results of the EBSA regional workshops will be submitted to the Scientific Body meeting of the Convention (SBSTTA 16), scheduled for April 2012, for its consideration, and the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11), scheduled for October 2012, for its endorsement.

The EBSAs reports endorsed by the Conference of the Parties will be transmitted to relevant UN General Assembly Process on marine biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Parties, other Governments and competent intergovernmental organizations are encouraged to cooperate collectively or on a regional or subregional basis, to identify and adopt appropriate measures for conservation and sustainable use in relation to ecologically or biologically significant areas including by establishing representative networks of marine protected areas.

Distinguished Participants,

In order to effectively facilitate efforts at global, regional and national levels toward achieving Aichi Biodiversity Targets in marine areas, the CBD Secretariat has set the theme of 2012 International Biodiversity Day on marine and coastal biodiversity.

The global celebration of International Biodiversity Day on the theme of marine biodiversity will bring unprecedented opportunities to engage political leaderships, senior policy makers, different industries, and various civil society groups in addressing complex challenges to marine biodiversity, further compounded by the threats of climate change and ocean acidification.

The outcomes of our collective efforts will then be presented at the high level segment of 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties being hosted by India in October 2012.

CBD Secretariat would like to invite all of you to join hands together with the Convention Parties and partners to make all these global opportunities meaningful and successful.

Finally, I wish you actively participate in the workshop deliberation in the next days, and make this important global EBSA process beneficial to this region's valuable efforts toward marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Thank you for your attention!