



COMMUNIQUÉ

Marine Biodiversity, Theme for the 2012 International Day for Biological Diversity

Montreal, 20 May 2011 – Challenges facing marine biodiversity are unprecedented. Life in the oceans is under serious threats. Continuously increasing human impacts in coastal areas have destroyed over 65% of seagrass and wetland habitat, degraded water quality and accelerated species invasions. It is estimated that the world has effectively lost 19% of the original area of coral reefs and 35% are seriously threatened with loss within the next decades. During the last two decades, 20% percent or 3.6 million ha of global mangrove cover have been lost. Roughly 80% of the world's marine fish stocks are fully exploited or overexploited.

These challenges are unknown to the public at large. In support of the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and with a view of raising public awareness, the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity is pleased to announce that the theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity for 22 May 2012 will be "Marine and Coastal Biodiversity".

At the Nagoya biodiversity summit, the 18,500 participants representing the 193 Parties and their partners agreed to increase by 2020 the cover of marine and coastal protected areas of the world from the current 1% to 10%. Importantly, 2012 coincides with the deadline agreed by the world leaders at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development to establish marine protected areas, including representative networks.

In announcing the theme, Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention, stated that "Implementing the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets on marine and coastal biodiversity is an overwhelming challenge that needs to be addressed without delay. This is the objective of the 2012 celebration of the IDB".

The global celebrations, which will take place in the second year of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, will contribute to the ten-year project to raise awareness about the role of biodiversity for human well-being and the actions that can be taken to protect it. It will also coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the convening of the India biodiversity summit in October 2012.

The theme will contribute to the Rio + 20 meeting and the work of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands taking place there in collaboration with the Secretariat. It will also complement global activities such as the Expo 2012 in Yeosu, Republic of Korea (May - July 2012), which is organized under the theme of "The Living Ocean and Coast", and the World Ocean Summit to be held in Singapore in February 2012.

Materials and information resources will be made available to Parties in fall 2011.

For more information on the International Day for Biological Diversity please visit: www.cbd.int/idb