STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE CELEBRATIONS OF OCEANS DAY 2011

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Life in harmony, into the future
いのちの共生を、未来へ
COP 10 / MOP 5

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to speak to you during this celebration of Oceans Day 2011 on the critical linkages between marine biodiversity and climate change. As you might know, there is increasing global recognition of the role of marine biodiversity in adaptation to and mitigation of global climate change impacts. For example, a 2009 UNEP report shows that the ocean's vegetated habitats, in particular mangroves, salt marshes and seagrasses, cover less than 0.5% of the sea bed and comprise only 0.05% of the plant biomass on land, while accounting for more than 50%, and perhaps as much as 71%, of all carbon storage in ocean sediments.

At the same time marine biodiversity is under threat as never before, with climate change itself being one of the main causes. For example, together with sea water warming, which causes coral bleaching, increasing acidity of sea water as a direct consequence of increased CO_2 concentration in the atmosphere is reducing the biocalcification of tropical and cold-water coral reefs, as well as other shell-forming organisms, such as calcareous phytoplankton. Given current emission rates, it is predicted that by 2100 70 per cent of cold-water corals will be exposed to corrosive waters. Moreover, 10 per cent of the surface waters of the highly productive Arctic Ocean will become under-saturated with respect to essential carbonate minerals by the year 2032, and the Southern Ocean will begin to become under-saturated by 2050. The potential disruptions this may cause to the marine food web are enormous.

All of this is why last year at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit, CBD COP 10 noted with concern the adverse impact of climate change on marine and coastal biodiversity and recognized that the ocean is one of the largest natural reservoirs of carbon, which can significantly affect the rate and scale of global climate change. COP 10 then invited Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to further integrate climate change-related aspects of marine and coastal biodiversity into relevant national strategies, action plans and programmes.

Stressing the importance of marine and coastal biodiversity to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, COP 10 also invited Parties, other Governments, relevant organizations, and indigenous and local communities to address climate-change adaptation and mitigation issues by:

- highlighting the role and potential of marine and coastal ecosystems, such as coral reefs and estuaries, and habitats such as tidal salt marshes, mangroves and seagrasses;
- extending their efforts in identifying current scientific and policy gaps in order to promote sustainable management, conservation and enhancement of natural carbon sequestration services of marine and coastal biodiversity;
- identifying and addressing the underlying drivers of marine and coastal ecosystem loss and destruction, and improving the sustainable management of coastal and marine areas; and
- enhancing their efforts to increase the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems, through, *inter alia*, improved implementation towards achieving the 2012 target of establishing marine protected areas, consistent with international law and based on best scientific information available, including representative networks.

COP 10 further took note that many concerns exist regarding the biological and biogeochemical consequences of ocean acidification for marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems, and the impacts of these changes on oceanic ecosystems and the services they provide. These services include fisheries, coastal protection, tourism, carbon sequestration and

climate regulation. Hence, COP 10 called on governments to take into account emerging knowledge on ocean acidification and to incorporate it into national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), national and local plans on integrated marine and coastal area management, and the design and management plans for marine and coastal protected areas.

I would also like to note that the CBD Secretariat is currently collaborating with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, along with other UN/international organizations and scientific groups, to develop a series of joint expert review processes to monitor and assess the impacts of ocean acidification on marine and coastal biodiversity. This type of collaboration will become increasingly necessary if we are to more effectively tackle the linked problems of marine biodiversity loss and climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Next year's 2012 International Day for Biodiversity will be celebrated under the theme of "Marine and Coastal Biodiversity." In addition, the second-ever celebration of Oceans Day will be hosted by Indian Government during CBD COP 11, to be held next October in Hyderabad, India. I invite you to join in these global celebrations while continuing to find ways to synergistically address marine biodiversity loss and climate change. Now more than ever we must act with a sense of urgency. For what we do – or fail to do – during these next ten years will determine the status of life on Earth for generations to come.

Thank you for your kind attention.