STATEMENT

OF

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

On the occasion of

The 6th GEF-UNDP-IMO Research and Development Forum and Exhibition on Ballast Water Management

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Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the city of Montreal, where the Great Lakes Waterway and the Saint Lawrence Seaway meet, on the occasion of the 6th GEF-UNDP-IMO Research and Development Forum and Exhibition on Ballast Water Management. I would like to start by congratulating GEF, UNDP, IMO and the GloBallast Partnerships for organizing this remarkable event that seeks to meet the global needs of technical and scientific cooperation in ballast water management. I would also like to thank the Government of Canada and supporting organizations for their contributions, and the many sponsors who, with their valuable donations, made this conference possible.

With the continuous expansion and development of international commerce, biological invasions have become a very real consequence of globalization. As the global international trade volume index expanded from 13 in 1950 to 109 in 2008, the number of marine, coastal and estuarine alien species increased from less than 200 to 10,000 species in the Mediterranean Sea alone. The increase in modern trade, travel and technology intensifies the risk of spread of alien species that includes unwanted pests and pathogens for many different countries across the world. I wish to remind you that invasive alien species are one of the direct drivers of biodiversity loss and have been estimated to cost our economies hundreds of billions of dollars each year due to the economic impact on both agricultural and ecosystem services as well as the high costs of eradication efforts. This does not even take into consideration the valuation of extinction of local species.

Article 8 (h) of the Convention on Biological Diversity states that "Each contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate, prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species". In decision VI/23, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species that Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species. Furthermore, Aichi Biodiversity Target 9 aims that "by 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are controlled or eradicated and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment". Although many countries have put in place measures and strategies to manage invasive species, the reality most countries face, especially developing countries and small island developing States, is that control and eradication of invasions in marine and coastal environments is far more difficult than that in terrestrial ecosystems. Early detection of invasions under water is hard to achieve, and rapid response in open water is simply hard to conduct. Therefore, prevention becomes a key measure for the management of aquatic invasions.

Around the world, a variety of fish, crabs, mussels, jellyfish and corals as well as microscopic pathogens are just some of the life forms that have created havoc after they were introduced. Most of these marine invasive species stow away in ship ballast and are then released in different biogeographic regions. They also hitch rides on the outside of ship hulls. Three to five billions of tons of ballast water are estimated to move around the world each year, and, while ballast water is essential for safe and efficient shipping operations in the sea, it has posed serious ecological, economic and health problems in countries with ports.

According to the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, progress has been made on a global scale in identifying the pathways through which both terrestrial and aquatic species enter alien environments and become invasive. However, weak border controls in many countries prevent this knowledge from being acted upon. Governments are increasingly taking steps to manage alien species invasions. More than half of the Parties of the CBD currently have national policies relevant to tackling this major threat to biodiversity. Overall, there has been some progress towards achieving Target 9 on invasive species, but additional actions are required if it is to be met by the 2020 deadline.

In 2006, the Conference of the Parties to the CBD urged Parties to ratify the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, or the BWM

Convention. We rest positive that the BWM Convention will enter into force very soon. I have learned that the number of ratifications from States has surpassed the criteria, and the requirement of 35 per cent of world merchant shipping tonnage is very close to being achieved. This will represent a very important milestone in preventing the spread of invasive species, as ships in international traffic will meet international standards. To do so, cost-effective measures will be more desirable than ever.

CBD has been continuously collaborating with IMO and other organizations that oversee international regulatory frameworks related to invasive alien species. The IMO and its partners have made significant steps with setting various guidelines on ballast water management and the prevention of bio-fouling for large and small ships. Therefore, measures are continuously being developed and improved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We must acknowledge that the implementation of effective measures on a global scale will be yet another great challenge due to the limited capacity in many parts of the world. CBD, in collaboration with experts and partners, has been working on capacity development to put measures in place. We urgently need to share experiences and best practices and enhance national capacity to expedite our collective implementation towards achieving Aichi Target 9. In this regard, the CBD Secretariat continues to collaborate with the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership (GIASI Partnership) to provide Parties with up-to-date information on invasive alien species in terrestrial and marine environments.

Since COP 10, in 2010, the CBD Secretariat has facilitated a global process of better understanding the ecological or biological significance of the world's oceans, covering so far more than 80 per cent of the world's oceans with regard to the description of areas meeting the CBD's scientific criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas. I hope that we can further facilitate the building of close linkages between the conservation of marine biodiversity and the sustainable development of maritime activities.

We are living in a critical era of Holocene extinction of species driven by human activities. The survival of humanity on this planet critically depends on biodiversity, and, thus, we bear an enormous responsibility to ensure that our utilization of biodiversity does not exceed nature's capacity to regenerate itself. The deep interconnectedness among people, other living organisms and ecosystems underpins the health and well-being of this planet and the life it sustains.

Recognizing this critical interconnectedness, I wish to invite all of you to join hands to address biodiversity considerations effectively in all facets of maritime activities, towards achieving our common goal of sustainable ocean development, as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. This will require strategic partnerships among countries, regional and global partners, and, of course, the research and development community. We will work together in this spirit of collaboration, as envisioned in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, to live in harmony with nature.

With this, I wish you a successful conference with fruitful discussions.

Thank you.

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