

## **Ocean, forest and biodiversity, Plenary Statement made by ICSU (International Council for Science)**

8th session of Open Working Group on SDGs, 4rd February 2014, New York

Thank you Mr co-Chair.

This is a statement on behalf of The Science & Technological Community.

Science reminds us that the ocean covers 70% of our planet's surface, hosts the largest connected ecosystem, regulates our climate, allows for global trade and provides numerous essential life supporting services and provisions such as oxygen, food, materials and a sense of place.

Science shows that forests cover 30% of global land area and contain over 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. Forests are recognized for their critical role in providing many ecosystems services such as water conservation, soil protection and carbon storage.

Science provides evidence that biodiversity underpins Earth's life support systems for people, now and in the future, through direct and indirect benefits, such as good health, water, energy, and climate regulation. Critically biodiversity provides adaptive capacity supporting current and future generations in the face of global change.

**Natural and social scientists working on ocean, biodiversity and forest are joining forces in the new international FUTURE EARTH research programme launched at Rio+20.**

They are delivering an increasing amount of information based on integrated global observing systems, data sharing, and earth system models.

They work with societies to find solutions that integrate increased use and protection of the ocean, forests and other ecosystems in an equitable way.

They are active in building scientific and technical capacities around the world.

In conclusion, the Science & Technological Community supports:

- 1) A standalone SDG on ocean and coasts; and
- 2) The inclusion of a set of biodiversity-related targets across SDGs as well as a specific mention of its role in supporting the Earth's life support systems.

Examples of specific targets are presented in three ICSU led papers placed on the website of this process, one on biodiversity, one on ocean and coasts, and one on forests.

Thank you Mr co-Chair, and the Science & Technological Community stands ready to continue working with you.

*Given by Dr Anne-Hélène Prieur-Richard, Acting Executive Director, DIVERSITAS, and Dr Martin Visbeck, GEOMAR Helmholtz Center for Ocean Research Kiel, Germany*