

Closing Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Antigua and Barbuda has the honor to make this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. We are at present 43 Small Island Developing States and territories, 38 of whom are Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and hence eligible to become Parties to the Cartagena Protocol. Indeed, one of our Members, Trinidad and Tobago, has already become a Party to the Protocol. As a group we have taken very seriously the special recognition accorded to Small Island Developing States in the Cartagena Protocol. We have sought at this meeting to concretize these provisions through the decisions adopted. In preparation for this meeting we held a preparatory workshop in Saint Kitts and Nevis. This workshop facilitated our internal discussion, and allowed us to come here with united positions, which we have sought to voice in the working groups. We wish to take this opportunity to thank the donor countries that provided financial assistance to us, namely Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, and the United Kingdom, as well as the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Environment Program for their valuable assistance. Mr. Chairman, our group of Small Island Developing States is very satisfied with the outcome of this first meeting of the ICCP. We think that valuable progress has been made on capacity building, information sharing, decision-making, handling and on compliance. But we still have a lot of work to do. It is for this reason that we have begun to plan ahead, so that we can be prepared to participate in the next meeting of the ICCP. The Alliance of Small Island States intends to have preparatory workshops in the regions that make up our group, and convene again at the inter-regional level prior to ICCP2. A proposal will be drafted with an agenda that closely follows the work plan for the ICCP, and will be presented for the consideration of donor Governments and institutions. We consider that the decisions taken this week relating to capacity building have given us the basis for seeking this support, and for this we are grateful. Mr. Chairman, our group of Small Island Developing States will seek to cooperate with other groups. We have participated in many such discussions during this week, particularly with other groups of developing countries. However, as Small Island Developing States we will continue to negotiate as a group in these meetings of the ICCP. It is also our intention to provide written comments and suggestions to the Secretariat in response to the various requests for submissions contained in our decisions. These will be submitted through the Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States on our behalf. In closing, Mr. Chairman, please allow me to thank you and the Bureau for your leadership, the Secretariat for their hard work, the Government of France and the people of Montpellier for their gracious welcome and hospitality during our stay in this wonderful city.

Thank you