



UNITED NATIONS

OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

Fifth Session

Remarks

**by Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares
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Secretary-General of the Conference**

**15 August 2022
(Conference Room 2)**

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I would like to warmly welcome you to this critical fifth session of the Intergovernmental Conference, convened pursuant to decision 76/564 of the General Assembly. While essential progress was made at the fourth session in March, the Conference considered that an additional session was required as soon as possible to make progress. And this is what brings us here today.

With a view to facilitating the prompt finalization of the work of the Conference, the President has prepared a further revised draft text of an agreement, which will be the basis for your negotiations these next two weeks.

Since the fourth session of this Conference, the 2022 United Nations Conference took place in Lisbon. I was heartened to see all sections of society,



in particular the youth, coming together with the same aim of reverting the trend on the declining health, resilience and productivity of our ocean and its resources. It is my hope that the hundreds of commitments made in Lisbon will quickly be turned into action. I note the many calls in Lisbon for the prompt conclusion of the work of this Conference.

The dire state of the ocean means that the time to act is now. And what better way to signal our determination to act, than finalizing a robust agreement that ensures the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in the largest spaces of the ocean?

At this critical stage of the negotiations, it is time to show the true spirit of multilateral cooperation. The focus must now be on finding compromise that allows for a mutually beneficial agreement. Delegations may need to exercise even greater flexibility than has already been shown in the interest of ensuring that the ocean gets what it urgently needs. I urge you to let the youth and future generations know through your actions that you will not let marine biodiversity collapse on your watch.

Madam President,
Distinguished delegates,

It is my hope that, later this year, when we formally celebrate the 40th anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of the Convention, we can also celebrate being a step closer to welcoming a new agreement to the law of the sea family. There would be no better way to mark that anniversary than to show how the Convention continues to adapt to new challenges and remains fit for purpose.



In closing, let me say how pleased I am to welcome civil society and other observers back in the room from the start of the session.

I wish you every success in your negotiations over the next two weeks. I assure you of the continued full support of the Office of Legal Affairs, and in particular of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as you fulfil your important mandate.

Thank you.