



**Algeria**

**الجزائر**

**Permanent Mission of Algeria  
to the United Nations  
New York**

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لدى الأمم المتحدة  
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**Statement**

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**On Behalf of the African Group**

by

H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Bessedik

Deputy Permanent Representative, Chargé d'affaires a.i

At the

Third Session of the 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

General exchange of views (item 5)

**New York, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

**Madam President,**

We are very grateful to you and your team for the preparation of the draft agreement as well as for its timely release. This has allowed our group to engage in early coordination. We appreciate the fact that parallel meetings have been limited to only two hours in the program of work. However, there will be less time for delegates during lunch hours to attend side events, which we very often find useful. But choices had to be made and our priority is to deliver the mandate of this IGC.

**Madam President,**

With this third session of the conference, we are entering, for the first time, into a text-based negotiations phase. These two weeks are probably going to be intense, the most intense since the inception of the BBNJ process about 15 years ago.

Let us quote words we have used in our statement at the closing of IGC2, « You have our trust, and we are confident in your abilities to put on the table a text representing a good basis for the steps ahead of us ». We can presently say that we were not wrong in stating this. The text in front of us is indeed a good basis to continue to make progress.

Like perhaps every delegation in this room, we are not happy with all what we have seen, and not seen, in the text. But this is multilateralism, and we believe we can improve your text to make it ours in order to reach the right balance so to make everyone, as we say at the UN, « equally unhappy », with a view to adopt a BBNJ instrument by next year.

The Common Heritage of Mankind principle is absent from the text. But it is true, the spirit is sometimes there. The African Group would like to reiterate the importance of this principle, not only for humankind but also for the high seas and marine life as a whole. Inter and intragenerational equity, peaceful use, in addition to benefits sharing, are amongst the elements arising from this principle. Adopting a new BBNJ instrument without this principle would be like giving life to a treaty of this importance without a soul, or like putting a ship in the water without a navigational instrument. This principle is applied by the International Seabed Authority (or ISA), and we cannot imagine what would have happened to the deep seabed without it...

The African Group seizes this occasion to wish again happy birthday to the ISA, as we did last month in Kingston during the celebration of its 25th anniversary. We believe that the soon coming BBNJ instrument will have to work closely with this organization, which is in an advanced stage of development of exploitation regulations process.

We thank the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for their efforts to prepare this session, including for the appropriate management of the Voluntary Trust Fund established to support the participation of experts from developing countries. We thank all contributors to this fund; however, we express concerns over the lack of funding to cover a larger number of delegates from African countries.

To conclude, it is our hope that even at this advanced and critical juncture in the BBNJ process, the collegial and positive atmosphere that has prevailed so far will continue. We look forward to listening carefully to others and working constructively with them.

I thank you.