



Statement of the European Union and its Member States

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

Third Session

New York, 30 August, 2019

Madam President,

On behalf of the EU and its MS, I wish to thank you for a very constructive session. You have continued to guide us in an exemplary manner. Our thanks are also due to the Facilitators as well as to DOALOS for all their hard work and to all delegations for the fruitful exchanges.

Madam President,

The EU and its Member States will continue to work towards reaching an Implementing Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea by 2020. We need to maintain the ambition on substance and to strengthen our efforts aiming at an effective legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

In order to make further progress and to reach our goal, we will need to move to the next level, beyond stating or explaining our positions. This raises the bar for ourselves as negotiators but requires also adjustments in our collective working methods so that they are conducive to entering into fully-fledged negotiations.

Madam President,

The new format of informal informals together with the Informal Working Groups served us well at this session for a first reading of the substantive part of the draft. We support a stronger role for the Facilitators in promoting greater interaction between delegations in order to achieve more concrete progress on key issues on which we still have divergent views. As we said in our opening statement last week, we remain supportive of parallel meetings. The outcome of these meetings should continue to be reported back to all delegations at the level of the Informal Working Groups and the Plenary. It is essential that all delegations continue to have a good overview of the negotiations that take place in different formats so that we can take stock of the progress made across the entire package. We appreciate that in order to ultimately achieve consensus on a text, we must also address these negotiations across the thematic parts of the package and not treat each part as a self-contained negotiation.

Madam President,

The draft text of the Agreement has provided a good basis for this session. With a view to IGC-4, it would be useful to revise the text and to narrow down the textual alternatives so that the draft reflects the rich discussions we have had during these two weeks. We have again full confidence in you, Madam President, to undertake this task. The facilitators also have a key role in assisting you in this regard. Drawing on their assessments and summaries, drafting could be consolidated on issues where convergence of views exists, and key divergences indicated where more in-depth negotiations are required.

Regarding the timeline, it will not come as a surprise that we would hope to receive such a document as soon as possible in 2019. This could then also advance common efforts and consultations among the delegations during the intersessional period. It would also be of utmost importance to inform all delegations of the working methods for IGC-4 as early as possible, so that we will all be fully prepared.

Madam President,

We also need to use the intersessional period in an effective manner. Let me assure you that for our part we are fully prepared to do this and to use all the time available before the next session to advance our work together with the other delegations.

As was already mentioned in our opening statement, the European Commission will organize a Workshop on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment in Brussels during the second half of January 2020 and we look forward to the participation of our negotiating partners. Some Member States are also planning to organize workshops in support of the negotiations.

Madam President,

The world is watching us. We want the IGC to send a strong message in favour of protecting our oceans in a collaborative manner. Given the recent high-level findings on the state of the marine

biodiversity, such as the assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, there is a clear sense of urgency. Our overarching objective is the conservation and sustainable use of the world's oceans. The European Union and its Member States are strongly committed to working with all delegations to achieve an ambitious, transformative and implementable BBNJ Agreement.

Let me conclude, Madam President, by reiterating our full support for you in guiding us forward to a successful conclusion of the negotiations.