



High Seas Alliance Opening Statement BBNJ IGC3 Item 5

19 August 2019

Thank you Madame President, I am honored to speak on behalf of the High Seas Alliance and its 40 member organizations many represented here today [from Pew Charitable Trusts, Greenpeace International, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, IUCN, Birdlife International, Blue Marine Foundation, IUCN, Marviva, Oceans North, Turkish Marine Research Foundation, Greenovation Hub,], who collectively represent millions of people around the world concerned with the future of the high seas, and we align ourselves with the statement made by [IUCN].

Madam President, we welcome and congratulate you on the Draft Text that you have provided, and it provides a strong basis to transition to text-based negotiations and we encourage States to constructively engage on the text to make timely progress on the issues under negotiation.

We would also like to thank your team and DOALOS for their continued hard work, and the UN Under-Secretary General for Legal Affairs and the Secretary General of this conference, Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, for his leadership.

Madame President, a recent landmark assessment by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has cautioned that the state of biodiversity and ecosystems of our planet is at its most perilous point in human history and the decline is accelerating. The assessment also recognized that highly protected and effectively implemented marine protected areas are one of the most effective tools to protect marine biodiversity. These leading scientists have pointed to the need for transformative change, and this BBNJ Agreement can be that transformative change for the ocean. This is a critical IGC session -- after well over a decade of consideration and with just two negotiating sessions left - we need to work toward finalizing this historic Agreement that will protect the biodiversity in nearly 70% of the global ocean and almost half our planet.

Throughout the intersessional period, the High Seas Alliance has been inspired during our work with governments and regional groupings throughout numerous workshops to provide a forum for consideration and discussion of the President's text in preparation for this session of the IGC.

Our key recommendations following these consultations can be found in the back of the room and on our website.

Madame President, we give you and all delegations our full support, and we are confident that under your guidance, and with the constructive attitude of all, we will make the needed progress in this session that will pave the way to conclude a final agreement in 2020 to protect our beautiful blue Planet.

Thank you very much.