



ICELAND

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Statement by

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Minister Counsellor

General Statement (item 5)

at the meeting 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 – second session

New York

19 August 2019

Madam president.

The Icelandic delegation is pleased to see you and your team, as well as other colleagues, again here in New York. Allow me to thank you, your team and the able staff at DOALOS for the Draft text of the BBNJ Instrument. We believe it captures the broad strokes of the discussions and proposals in the previous sessions of the IGC and provides a useful basis for our negotiations in this third session of the BBNJ IGC. Needless to say, there are still important issues undecided and fundamental differences of view unsettled. As before, our view is that we need to invest the necessary time in resolving all differences before we can conclude the negotiations.

The core item on our agenda (Item 6) is consideration of the subject matter of Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Resolution 72/249. In doing so we must constantly keep in mind the other parts of the Resolution, which set the mandate for this conference, including the instructions in Paragraph 7 that “this process and its result should not undermine existing relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional and sectoral bodies.”

However, when the Resolution in Paragraph 1 prescribes that the new instrument should be “developed as soon as possible”, our view is that we will not have a real UN Instrument that will work for the future unless we have a general consensus among the UN Member States. Consensus is both a prerequisite for developing the BBNJ instrument and for universal participation in it.

Madam President.

The Icelandic delegation has stated in previous sessions that a practical approach in concluding the BBNJ negotiations as soon as possible is to decide early on on the form of the new BBNJ structure. It is easier to encapture the functions if we know the form. Our view is that the BBNJ instrument should have an BBNJ institutional structure that is light, functional and economical and builds on already existing regional and sectoral bodies and their expertise in their respective fields. Certain core functions would be entrusted to the global level, while the regional and sectoral level would bear the bulk of the work under the instrument.

In both the previous IGC sessions we have made some progress. We expect the same in this third session of the IGC, particularly in the informal-informals which are scheduled on many of the meeting days. We will address individual substantive matters during the course of the session, we look forward to constructive negotiations and ensure you of the full dedication and cooperation of the Icelandic delegation.