

Instruction Note for Participants

Intersessional work on BBNJ

Note by the President

Platform

1. Intersessional work on BBNJ will be conducted virtually from September to December 2020 hosted through a dedicated MS Teams platform. The intersessional work may take the form of webinars or online discussion forums.

Organization of work

2. The intersessional work will address the four thematic clusters of the package set out in General Assembly resolution 72/249 of 24 December 2017 as well as cross cutting issues and will be facilitated by the Facilitator of the informal Working Group for each of the workstreams. The Office of Legal Affairs, through its Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), which carries out the secretariat support functions for the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference (contact: doalos@un.org), will support the conduct of the intersessional work.
3. The programme of the intersessional work, prepared by the President, has been made available on the Conference website (<https://www.un.org/bbnj/>).
4. Documents of reference include, but are not limited to the *Revised draft text of an agreement, 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* (A/CONF.232/2020/3) and the article-by-article compilation of textual proposals to the revised draft text of an agreement as posted on the DOALOS website (<https://www.un.org/bbnj/content/fourth-substantive-session>). Reference is also made to the compilation of textual proposals contained in the conference room paper issued at the conclusion of the third session (A/CONF.232/2019/CRP.1).

Participation

5. In line with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 72/249 of 24 December 2017, the intersessional work shall be open to “all States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and parties to [UNCLOS]”. All other entities and/or organizations identified in paragraphs 12 to 15 of resolution 72/249 may also participate in the intersessional work as observers. In this Note, they are collectively referred to as “Delegations”.

Modalities for Participation

6. In order to identify and register representatives participating in the intersessional work, States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and States Parties to UNCLOS are requested to communicate the name(s), title(s) and email address(es) of representative(s) who will participate in the intersessional work.
7. Observers that have participated in the previous sessions of the Conference are also invited to register for the intersessional work by communicating the name(s), title(s) and email address(es) of representative(s) who will participate in the intersessional work. Modalities for registration will be indicated on the Conference website (<https://www.un.org/bbnj/>).

Guidance on the use of the online discussion forum

8. The Facilitator will post specific issue(s) or topic(s) for discussion in the forum. Delegations are invited to provide their questions, comments or views through the related chat feature in the channel.
9. Posts may be made on behalf of individual States or jointly by groups of States. Any post made on behalf of more than one State should clearly indicate on behalf of which States or group of States it is being made. **Each Delegation should nominate only**

one representative to post comments with regard to the workstream in question on behalf of that Delegation or Group.

10. Delegations are encouraged to respond to comments of other Delegations.
11. Delegations are requested to provide the reference number or citation when referring to draft provisions and proposals contained in documents of the Conference, as well as when referring to any other instrument or publication.
12. Delegations are encouraged to limit their posts to the issues covered in the topic of discussion.
13. Delegations are requested to use the following template in putting forward their comments, proposals or questions, in order to provide clarity to other Delegations and to the Facilitator.

Name(s) of Delegation(s) making comment/proposal/question: “Name(s) of Delegation(s)”

In response to comment of “Name(s) of Delegation(s)” at “date / time” (if applicable)

Relevant articles: “List of articles to which proposal relates” (if applicable)

Proposal: “Text of proposal” (if applicable)

Commentary/Rationale/Question: “Comments/reasons for proposal/questions”

Relevant documents: “Title, citation, and/or link to documents relevant to the proposal”

14. Delegations are advised that no translation will be available during the intersessional work.

Role of Facilitator in the online discussion forum

15. The Facilitator will monitor the discussion and will intervene, as appropriate, to guide the discussion.

Timeframe for discussions in the online discussion forum

16. The discussions for the particular workstream will take in place in two rounds. In the first round, commencing on the first day that the online discussion forum is opened, Delegations will have 5 days to discuss the identified topic.
17. After the 5 days have elapsed, the forum will be closed for 4 days to allow the Facilitator, with the assistance of the Secretariat, to take stock of the discussions.
18. A second round of discussions will begin thereafter. In preparation for the second round of discussions, the Facilitator will identify specific issues or topics for discussion. The second round will be open for 5 days.

Outcome of discussions

19. The President of the Conference will request the Facilitators to provide an oral report of the discussions in their workstream to the plenary at the fourth session of the Conference, in line with past practice of informal working groups.

Technical issues

20. Delegations may contact Mr. Yoshinobu Takei, Legal Officer, DOALOS <takei@un.org> should they encounter any technical issues in the use of the forum.