

Japan's Statement on MGR, Morning, Sept.13

Firstly, I would like to respond to the earlier intervention that living resources were excluded from the scope of CHM because of lack of knowledge on those living resources at the time of UNCLOS negotiations.

Regarding the existence of living organisms in the deep sea, there is a record that the echinoderms or Basket Star was collected in the Arctic Ocean in 1818, and in 1868 many deep-sea creatures were collected off Florida. Regarding the usefulness of biological resources, it was reported that extract obtained from Sea-pineapple or Ascidiacea showed anticancer effect in 1969, and Patent applications were filed for the method of producing vitamins used for medicine from marine organisms in 1979 and for methods for producing antitumor substances from shellfish in 1982. In this way, the usefulness of living resources in deep sea floor was recognized at the latest in the 1970s. At the time of UNCLOS negotiations, many scientists already recognized the existence of biological resources in the deep seafloor. UNCLOS was negotiated under such circumstances and was agreed to apply the principle of CHM only to mineral resources in the Area. And our delegation believes the new instrument should be consistent with UNCLOS.

Regarding the Monitoring and review (MGR), we understand the monitoring of the utilization of MGR aims to trace users for payment of monetary benefit sharing. Such a mechanism would increase the cost and burden for researchers and thereby would act as disincentive for researchers to engage in development of MGR from ABNJ.

In our exchange of views with stakeholders it was pointed out that if compulsory payment is introduced, researchers would avoid using MGRs in ABNJ and they would seek similar MGR from their countries Exclusive Economic Zones. Using DNA bar-coding technology, for example, fish species can be identified. If you analyze genetic information of imported fish using this technology, this would contribute to the eradication of IUU fishing. Such a technology is beneficial for everyone although may not generate huge financial benefit.

Development of such technology should be promoted by the new instrument, however, the system of monetary benefit sharing runs counter to the promotion of researches. For these reasons, our delegation does not support the monitoring which presupposes monetary benefit sharing.

In terms of the transparency of MGR activities in ABNJ, it should be noted that the locations of various countries' research vessels can be acquired on line. SOLAS Convention requires those vessels to equip with Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) which transmit their locations and the information is made public on IMO's website.