



PHILIPPINES

Fourth Session

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
Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters, New York, 7-18 March 2022

18 March 2022

Speaker:

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Department of Foreign Affairs
Republic of the Philippines

CLOSING STATEMENT

Thank you, Madame President.

The Philippines aligns itself with the statement delivered by Pakistan on behalf of G77 and China.

We congratulate you the Bureau for the successful organization of this fourth session of the IGC. That this was held in person is by itself a success. Over this past 10 days we have seen much progress, borne perhaps by delegations' euphoria of negotiating in person again.

We appreciate the work of the facilitators in guiding delegations in the discussions. We also thank DOALOS for their always reliable substantive and administrative support.

When IGC 4 was postponed by the pandemic in 2020, the two-year hiatus was not anticipated. However, the intersessional work of the President and other related activities, such as the High Seas Treaty Dialogues, allowed delegations to further study positions based on discussions of the package. It was an opportunity to reflect on positions, and seriously consider the marching order of the President to find possible convergence in delegations' proposals.

Madame President, the Philippines took heed of your marching orders: we reviewed our positions, reached across the aisle, demonstrated flexibility, supported proposals of other delegations we deem consistent with the purpose of the Agreement, and submitted joint proposals for consideration.

At the same time, in this process of narrowing down positions of divergence, the Philippines retains deeply held principles under UNCLOS which should be included in the draft text:

First, the instrument must be anchored on the Common Heritage of Mankind, as enshrined in UNCLOS.

Second, it must give due regard to the rights and jurisdiction of adjacent coastal States.

Third, special recognition must be accorded to archipelagic States.

Fourth, the agreement must incorporate the precautionary principle.

Finally, it must be imbued with transparency of action and support.

Madame President, we express support for the way forward that you provided us this morning, particularly on the convening of IGC5 in August 2022. We look to concluding this Agreement by then. The urgency of protecting our high seas and its resources is rising. 2022 is after all a special year, for it is the 40th Anniversary of UNCLOS, the foundation upon which this Agreement is anchored. We hope that in the spirit of that, we will be able, in August, to reach convergence on all points and come to a final text. Thank you, Madame President.