



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

**AT THE FOURTH SESSION
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**

Item 5: General exchange of views

New York, 18th March 2022

please check against delivery

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**Madam President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 54 Members States of the African Group.
2. Let me take this opportunity on behalf of the African Group to thank you, Madam President, the facilitators, for helping us navigate these two productive weeks of negotiations, following the 2 years gap owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Our thanks also to the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Secretariat (DOALOS) for the incredible work done, together with the President and Bureau to get us to this conference room for IGC4, despite the limiting modalities.
4. We align this statement with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
5. Our work in IGC4 has been constructive and productive. Groups and delegates have equally expressed flexibility or the willingness to be flexible, even though the conference could not conclude the instrument as mandated in General Assembly resolution 72/249 of 24 December 2017.
6. The African Group approached IGC4 constructively and negotiated in good faith, with our priorities as our

“lighthouse”. The African Group’s priorities are underpinned by the overall objective to negotiate a treaty text that is effective and implementable, so that we can conserve and sustainable use marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ).

7. We will work towards concluding the treaty at the earliest opportunity, as long as the issues of importance to us are addressed in the instrument.
8. Accordingly, the African Group re-echoes the firm view expressed by G77 and China that the principle of the common heritage of humankind should guide and underpin the new legal regime for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). Let us recall the importance of having a realizable access and sharing of benefits of Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs) mechanism, which will enable equitable sharing of benefits among all State Parties, especially developing State Parties.
9. We are conscious of the importance of securing the sustainability of the oceans for present and future generations, consistent with agenda 2030, in particular goal 14.
10. The African Group, therefore, is concerned at the present inequitable distribution of the benefits arising from access and exploitation of resources from the high

seas; and the unsustainable patterns of consumption and exploitation of the ocean particularly in the ABNJ.

11. We believe that the current framework for the governance of the ABNJ is fragmented and insufficient to address the pressures placed on marine biodiversity; and therefore, committed to ensuring environmentally sound management of biodiversity based on best scientific knowledge, including the adoption of measures for the conservation of marine biodiversity.
12. We welcome meaningful engagement on capacity building and the equitable transfer of marine technology; and urged for the adoption of a strong institutional framework to achieve the goals of conservation as well as sustainable and equitable use of marine biodiversity of the ABNJ.

Madam President,

13. As we look forward to ICG5, the African Group joins G77 and China to call for a second revised President's text; and we entrust you, Madam President, with the important role of producing an updated draft treaty text to be circulated within the time suggested by you, taking into consideration the views of the African Group, including the proposals that have garnered cross-regional support.
14. The African Group further re-echoes the importance of having non-New York based experts attend IGC5, and

we therefore underscore the critical role of the Voluntary Trust Fund in this regard. We thank all those who made donations to the fund, and further call on States who are in a position to do so, to donate to the Voluntary Trust Fund.

15. In **conclusion**, let me thank all delegations for the constructive engagement, and the many useful proposals which we will study. The Group assures all delegations that we shall continue to engage constructively, including during the intersessional period, to collectively fulfil our obligations to future generations.
16. We thank the interpreters for their kind work, and observers including civil society for their useful insights.
17. Safe travels to all those heading back to respective capitals.
18. I thank you for your kind attention.