



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY MR LIONEL YEE WOON CHIN,
DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
AT THE
THIRD 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**

**19 AUGUST 2019
AGENDA ITEM 5**

Mdm President,

1. I would like to begin by aligning my delegation with the statements by Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by Belize, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. I would like to thank you for the draft Text of the Instrument, which has succinctly captured the discussions from the previous two sessions of the Intergovernmental Conference, and is a helpful tool in the preparation for this session of the Intergovernmental Conference.

2. My delegation would like to make three points. First, with the draft Text of the Instrument, this Conference has reached a new stage of its deliberations with ideas and concepts translated into concrete treaty-type language. We look forward to engaging in more in-depth discussions in the coming days to flesh out what will eventually become the deliverable of this Intergovernmental Conference. In doing so, it is important that all of us work constructively towards an Instrument that enjoys near-universal, if not universal, participation. The reality is that we cannot have

significant numbers of non-parties to the Instrument if we are to fulfil our mandate of ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine genetic resources (MGRs) of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJs).

3. In this regard, it must be borne in mind that with respect to MGRs, we are not dealing with minerals but resources whose value lies beyond mere harvesting and can only be fully realised through effective marine scientific research. Research and its downstream activities can be easily moved from one jurisdiction to another. Hence the importance of near-universality of the regime. The same applies to mechanisms governing environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and area-based management tools (ABMTs), including marine protected areas (MPAs), so that these regimes are not circumvented by an entity simply operating under the umbrella of a non-party. To make capacity-building and transfer of marine technology effective, it will also be essential for both potential contributors and recipients to be on board.

4. Therefore, my delegation fully supports adopting an approach which aims at achieving a consensus in our undertaking, similar to the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea from 1973 to 1982, which concluded UNCLOS. In this regard, we are heartened by the arrangements made for informal informals at this session, which we believe will encourage delegations to engage in more candid discussions, find common ground and develop innovative solutions.

5. Second, my delegation would like to urge all delegations to continue their efforts in translating their ideas into what these actually mean in practice. We all need to gain a more concrete appreciation of what States Parties will be signing up to in terms of both obligations and rights under the Instrument. Again, my delegation welcomes the convening of informal informal sessions as a useful platform to facilitate discussions on the nuts and bolts of various proposals. Greater clarity will also facilitate wider participation in the Instrument.

6. Third, it is worth bearing in mind that sound policy and international law must be supported by sound science, which is also a practical tool to help bridge the gaps among delegations. My delegation is happy to announce that a workshop will take place this Saturday that will explore the nexus between law, policy and science, which underpins the conservation and sustainable use of MGRs of the ABNJ. This workshop is co-organised by the Governments of Singapore and Norway, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the International Council of Environmental Law and Harvard University. It will take place on 24 August 2019 from 10 am to 4 pm at Singapore's Permanent Mission to the UN. We look forward to the participation of interested delegations in the workshop.

7. In concluding my intervention, my delegation would like to reaffirm our commitment to contributing constructively to these negotiations to make further progress on our ultimate goal of developing an Instrument that will ensure the conservation and sustainable use of MGRs of ABNJs. We would like to assure you, Mdm President, of our fullest support in guiding us to the fulfilment of our mandate.

8. I thank you very much for your attention, Mdm President.