

WWF Statement on IV. Institutional arrangements

Thank you Madam President, for giving WWF the floor.

WWF supports the statement made by the High Seas Alliance.

WWF strongly believes that the agreement needs to create strong institutions - for enabling the implementation of the agreement itself but importantly also with a view to becoming a 'voice for the ocean' at a time when individual and cumulative impacts are increasingly putting pressure on the ocean and its biodiversity.

Until now, the international community lacks a dedicated body that is recognised as the principal forum where oceans issues are addressed. A myriad other bodies pick up aspects of oceans issues relevant to their mandates and competencies - but none has that overall holistic perspective. This is central to WWF's ambition for an 'enhanced cooperation' regime for BBNJ provided for in the agreement.

As set out in our Brief for IGC1 and 2, we propose a reinterpretation of the UNCLOS general duty to cooperate from a traditional 'the ocean belongs to no-one' attitude to a caring one of 'the ocean belongs to everyone'. The BBNJ COP would then become the global 'voice for the ocean'.

In our view, the COP would have four general areas of competency:

1. to encourage solid, and applied ocean science and marshal it in pursuit of informed decision-making in all relevant processes and fora, including informed public discussion;
2. to have oversight of decision-making by existing sectoral bodies to give effect to 'enhanced cooperation' obligations and commitments relevant to BBNJ;
3. to be a voice for the health of oceans in BBNJ for the full suite of threats they face – from both in situ maritime activities and terrestrial activities (where pollution from macro- and micro-plastics is an obvious example); and
4. to have reserve powers to fill procedural and competency gaps and to ensure obligations are met, including urging universal participation by states in other relevant agreements.

In support of a COP with a science-led voice for the oceans and a sectoral management oversight role, it is of key importance that the BBNJ agreement establishes a subsidiary body on scientific and technical advice (SBSTA). We wish to support New Zealand with respect to the need for this body to be purely scientific, and with traditional knowledge being considered alongside science. Furthermore, the scientific and technical body must not serve as a political body..

The SBSTA would not only respond to COP requests for support, but also initiate its own work programme to ensure the COP and the member States remain aware and informed of the full range of current and emerging issues relevant to its mission and mandate.

For paragraph 3, Establishing other support bodies, as was suggested by a number of delegations , such as a compliance committee or an administration and finance committee, can safely be left to the COP to establish, once the scope of the BBNJ agreement has been set.

Thank you Madam President.

[1] [Brief to Governments](#), WWF International 2018