



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
(CARICOM)**

**DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE BAHAMAS
AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION
FOR THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE BBNJ AGREEMENT
ITEM 5 (CLUSTER II, ISSUE 7) – MODALITIES FOR THE
OPERATION OF THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

22 April 2025

Modalities for the operation of the Clearing-house Mechanism

22 April 2025

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

As this is our first time taking the floor, we extend our condolences to Argentina and the Catholic Community on the passing of Pope Francis.

On the Clearing House Mechanism, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of G77 and China and the statement made on behalf of AOSIS.

CARICOM thanks the Secretariat (DOALOS) for the Guiding Note on issues pertaining to the operation of the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) under the BBNJ Agreement. It has been helpful in highlighting the modalities for the operation of the clearing-house mechanism that will be ventilated this week as we work through those elements necessary for the First meeting of the Conference of Parties.

In seeking to define the operations and implement modalities for the Clearing House Mechanism which will serve as a centralized platform for the BBNJ Agreement and be fit-for-purpose to achieve its ambitious objectives, and

although the demands of the mechanism may be uniquely comprehensive and broad in scope, CARICOM feels it not necessary to entirely reinvent the wheel.

We envision the consideration of the modalities of the CHM to involve two primary categories: those modalities vested with administrative functions critical for the CHM's management and governance, and those modalities required for facilitating information exchange and technical cooperation amongst member states, IFB's, and other relevant stakeholders.

On Question (1) regarding what elements are required for operationalizing an effective and fit-for-purpose BBNJ Clearing-House Mechanism that is accessible and optimized for all users, CARICOM believes the Mechanism should be user-friendly, interactive, transparent, adaptable, multilingual and interoperable to carry out its functions. We recognize that connectivity challenges should be considered in the platforms design whereby protocols are in place to assist users in accessing the platform or parts of the platform offline, where possible, when faced with such challenges.

As there will be diverse and varied users of the mechanism with differentiated access, it may be useful to consider the designation of focal points to assist in managing the users of the system.

While the CHM's engagement and linkages with all subsidiary bodies is essential, special focus should be given to the match-making function of the CHM.

For example, CARICOM highlights the interlinkages between the CHM and the Capacity building and transfer of marine technology (CBTMT) Committee in facilitating the Agreements objectives. Specifically, in ensuring that match-making modalities are effective and intentional in appropriately matching needs for capacity building and the transfer of marine technology with available resources and support, especially given that during the early stages of the Agreements entry into force, such support will be instrumental in facilitating the ability of developing states to engage and meet their obligations with respect to the Agreement. To this end, the development of templates for needs assessments, informed by the priorities of SIDS, LDC's and LLC's, which can be feed into the CHM will be a useful tool. There could also be consideration for a modality through the CHM for recipients of capacity building to provide feedback – this may help with the quality and relevance of the resources being identified.

CARICOM further acknowledges and supports the idea that the match-making functionality and access to funding, should be guided by, but not conditional on self-assessments, and other relevant inputs. That being said, while the relationship between the CHM and the CBTMT Committee is critical for supporting SIDS, LDC's and LLC's, it should not result in the CBTMT Committee becoming the gatekeepers of the Special Fund.

On Question (2) regarding elements that would require in-depth technical analysis (consider examples at paragraph 99(b) of the Note by the

Secretariat, CARICOM sees these questions as inter-connected elements that cannot be easily considered separately for questions 3 and 4.

For CARICOM, the Secretariat's central role in hosting the clearing house mechanism will require considered technical analysis which will assist in furthering the work of the PrepCom. Likewise, as we saw from our discussions around the subsidiary bodies, those outcomes will guide and feed heavily into our deliberations on the CHM's modalities. To this end, it may be useful to develop a flow-chart of the relationship and action points between the Secretariat, the subsidiary bodies and CHM to help to visualize their connections and linkages so as to better guide our deliberations.

CARICOM also supports the undertaking of an in-depth analysis, during the intersessional period before the second PrepCom, of the functions of the mechanism with respect to notifications in relation to Economic Impact Assessment's (EIA's) and marine genetic resources (MGR's). In considering the process for generating the BBNJ standardized batch identifiers in particular, expert knowledge would be a useful resource in determining its implementation within the CHM's broader notification system with respect to MGR's. Specifically, this analysis should fully examine the relevance and value added of this identifier system, including insights for linking information between the CHM, regional, sub-regional, national registries and other databases, where appropriate.

Realising a clearing house mechanism that can deliver on the mandates of the Agreement as well as be adaptable and capable of evolution requires sustained financial and human resources. In considering the depth and breadth of resources required, CARICOM is of the view that an incremental, phased approach to operationalizing the clearing house mechanism presents a practical and realistic way forward. To this end, a technical analysis of a potential roadmap for this approach as well as its resources implications are indispensable to supporting our work. Complementary to this process, we invite the Co-Chairs to provide feedback on potential donors for financing the incremental phases of CHM's development and implementation.

In closing this first intervention, CARICOM thanks the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Janine Felson and Ambassador Adam McCarthy, the Bureau and DOALOS, for their invaluable support. We assure you of CARICOM's commitment to the Preparatory Commission as we work towards our mandate to implement a BBNJ Agreement in the manner and spirit in which this hard-fought document was negotiated.

I thank you.