



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA  
DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF IRAQ AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE  
PREPARATORY COMMISSION OF THE BBNJ AGREEMENT - ITEM 5 (CLUSTER 1, ISSUE  
4): ARRANGEMENT FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE SECRETARIAT,  
INCLUDING ITS SEAT  
(15 April 2025)**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

1. I have the honour to deliver this intervention on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. From the onset, I wish to thank the Secretariat for providing the information note to aid our discussions and deliberations on the matter. While the Co-Chair's note provides a good starting point, we believe additional information will be required to facilitate States' determination on the most effective operational parameters and structure of the new Secretariat.

Dear Co-Chairs,

3. I wish to inform that the Group is still discussing the matter and formulating its position on the topic. However, we wish to make the following initial remarks on the matter of the "Arrangements for the functioning of the Secretariat, including its seat".

Firstly, even though we are still analyzing the proper degree of linkage or relationship between the Secretariat and the United Nations, we recognize that it is important to ensure that the Secretariat is provided with the necessary flexibility to fulfill its mandated functions under the Agreement and any future COP decisions, and the requisite to address various aspects related to its capacity to coordinate with the relevant bodies, while ensuring the Secretariat complies with high levels of transparency and accountability.

Secondly, we stress that the Secretariat's institutional design, including its size, structure and funding, takes into consideration its relationship with the UN System as well as other necessary factors to facilitate its effective functioning. Therefore, it may be necessary to have a comprehensive comparative analysis of existing multilateral Secretariats. Furthermore, the Agreement's objectives must be upheld by the Secretariat and remain accountable to the Parties while ensuring operational independence.

Thirdly, arrangements need to ensure equitable representation of developing countries in the Secretariat at various levels that would in turn require due attention including to unrepresented and underrepresented developing States in future and the importance of avoiding a situation where developing states are not equitably represented.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

4. We believe the aforementioned structural elements require careful consideration by this PrepCom to ensure the Secretariat effectively serves the Parties and the Agreement's objectives.
5. Due regard should be also had to the privileges and immunities of representatives of States participating in the proceedings related to the Agreement and its COP thereto. Additionally, obligations for facilitating the presence and participation of representatives including granting visas required and other related matters could be explored.

6. Finally, distinguished Co-Chairs, we wish to propose that a comparative report on existing global multilateral secretariats is needed and should cover the elements outlined earlier in this statement. This could be presented as a new note from the interim secretariat and should not contain any proposals or recommendations from the interim Secretariat at this stage. We look forward to hearing other distinguished delegations' positions on this matter as we continue our consideration and dialogue. Please count on the G-77's constructive engagement.

I thank you.