

WCC-2020-Res-128-EN

Acting for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in the ocean beyond national jurisdiction

RECOGNISING that the ocean in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) is a common concern of humankind and it should be protected as one ocean;

NOTING that marine areas beyond national jurisdiction comprise nearly two-thirds of the world's ocean and provide incalculable ecological, economic, social, cultural, scientific and food-security benefits to humanity;

CONCERNED about rising threats to marine biodiversity in ABNJ, including climate change, ocean acidification, deoxygenation, overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, deep-ocean mining, habitat destruction, noise, and chemical and plastic pollution;

NOTING that highly protected marine protected areas (MPAs) and prior environmental impact assessments (EIAs) are critical tools for safeguarding marine biodiversity, but that less than 1% of the ocean in ABNJ is highly protected and that uniform EIA requirements are lacking for ABNJ;

WELCOMING the decision by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 72/249, 2017) to convene an intergovernmental conference from 2018 to 2020 to elaborate the text of, and conclude in 2020, an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in ABNJ;

RECALLING relevant IUCN Resolutions and outcome documents, including Resolutions 6.047 *Advancing conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction* and 6.050 *Increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation* (both adopted in Hawai'i, 2016), which called on states to support a robust new Agreement and designate and implement at least 30% of each marine habitat in a network of highly protected marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2030; and

RECOGNISING that international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, provides the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. URGES states to expeditiously conclude the negotiation of a new and ambitious international legally binding instrument, under UNCLOS, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of ABNJ, to:

a. complete their work at the earliest possible date in March 2022; and

b. ensure that the final text provides for:

i. expeditious identification, establishment and management of an ecologically representative, well-connected, well-managed network of effective MPAs, including a substantial portion of which are highly and fully protected, and other area-based management tools (ABMT) in ABNJ through a transparent, science-based process;

ii. rigorous, integrated, independent, science-based assessment, management and monitoring of the individual and cumulative effects of human activities, and climate change on marine biological diversity in ABNJ;

iii. acquisition of scientific data necessary to the achievement of its objectives;

iv. a decision-making body, a scientific advisory body and effective decision-making and dispute-resolution provisions;

v. strategic environmental assessments;

vi. ensuring that, if environmental assessments find that an activity poses significant adverse effects to ABNJ, such activity is managed to prevent such impacts or not permitted to proceed;

vii. effective monitoring, compliance and enforcement, and best environmental standards, including transparency best practices;

viii. effective capacity building and transfer of marine technology; and

ix. fair and equitable sharing of benefits, which may include monetary and non-monetary, from marine genetic resources from ABNJ;

2. CALLS ON the Director General, Commissions and Secretariat to provide technical support and to promote and support these actions; and

3. ENCOURAGES IUCN and its Members to promote these objectives and to actively support rapid conclusion, adoption and early ratification and implementation of the instrument once adopted.