

BBNJ IGC4

18 March 2022

IUCN (speaker: Kristina Gjerde)

Closing Statement

Thank you, Madam President, for giving IUCN the opportunity to deliver our closing statement. Below is the full version for your consideration.

IUCN believes that now is the time to be bold, visionary and pragmatic for the benefit of humankind and the ocean:

- **Be Bold:** Adopt ambitious goals and objectives focused on securing ocean health, productivity and resilience for the benefit of humankind and the ocean.
- **Be Visionary:** Manage the global ocean as a shared commons based on principles of equity, informed decision-making, shared responsibility, and accountability.
- **Be Pragmatic:** Adopt systematic, strategic and collaborative processes to identify common interests and avoid competition while building nimble institutions ready to manage the challenges of a rapidly changing ocean.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) would first like to express its appreciation for the extraordinary efforts deployed in convening this fourth Intergovernmental Conference (IGC4), in spite of challenging circumstances. We particularly wish to congratulate the President, Facilitators, Secretariat (DOALOS), delegates, and observers on the conclusion of two intense weeks of negotiations. IUCN is grateful that civil society was eventually able to attend in person, and thanks the many involved for their efforts to open the doors to this important process.

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essential. A robust, equitable, flexible and multipronged mechanism for financing implementation requires proper modalities such as a Standing Committee on Finance as well as diverse and reliable resources. The cost of inaction would far exceed the costs of establishing such a mechanism.

6. Strengthening and not undermining existing bodies. IUCN welcomes and values the contributions of existing IFBs in conserving and using sustainably marine biodiversity in ABNJ. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize the constraints of individual organizations in advancing integrated ecosystem-based management or addressing cumulative effects. Only an empowered and future-looking BBNJ Agreement can provide the global platform necessary to overcome geospatial boundaries, limited timeframes, competing mandates and taxonomic limitations. This approach can reconcile the current patchwork in a seamless manner and further strengthen global cooperation.

As the BBNJ negotiations enter their final phase, IUCN looks to the future with hope for -

Fostering engagement: Whilst recognizing the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the global ocean and its biodiversity are a matter of universal concern. As such, civil society, the scientific community, indigenous peoples and local communities, and the broader public should have every opportunity to participate and contribute to this process. We hope that IGC5 can take place with the full and effective participation of civil society so that negotiations can benefit from their knowledge and wisdom as has historically been the case.

Marine science: And finally, IUCN welcomes the recognition of the importance of science and traditional knowledge to inform decision making. In the time of rising climatic pressures and biodiversity loss, international support for science, data and infrastructure to share data will be vital to enable timely responses to the increasing pressures of climate change on marine biodiversity in ABNJ. IUCN suggests that the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development be

appropriately resourced, including by the global BBNJ community, to serve as a framework to develop science programs in all ocean basins to increase biodiversity knowledge and understanding of ABNJ.

Since the beginning of the BBNJ process, IUCN has worked with legal experts, scientists, civil society and other stakeholders from around the world to bring in legal expertise and best practices in conservation and scientific research to inform the developing BBNJ Agreement. A selection of resources is available at a dedicated IUCN BBNJ IGC4 webpage:³

In closing, IUCN offers our continued support during the intersessional period, and we look forward to working with you to implement the BBNJ Treaty.

Thank you. Madame President!

³ <https://www.iucn.org/theme/marine-and-polar/our-work/international-ocean-governance/unclos/bbnj-igc4>