



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. EMAD MORCOS MATTAR, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE ORGANISATONAL MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION (New York, 16 April 2018)

Madame President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to congratulate you for the assumption of your duties as the president of the Intergovernmental Conference on an International Legally Binding Instrument Under The United Nations Convention on The Law of The Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction; as well as to express our full trust in your leadership and ability to steer the work of the IGC to reach a successful conclusion. Please rest assured that you would enjoy the full support and cooperation of the Group of 77 and China.

Madame President,

The BBNJ process went through many millstones; the work done so far is the fruit of the efforts and determination shown by member states, as well as civil society and all other relevant stakeholders who truly believe in the necessity to conserve and sustainably use our oceans and seas in a responsible manner.

The recommendations of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, as well as the agreed package in 2011, the outcome of the four meetings of the Preparatory Committee established by resolution 69/292, in particular the Report of the Preparatory Committee, and finally the adoption of resolution 72/249 of 24 December 2017 whereas the General Assembly decided to convene this Intergovernmental Conference; they provided a solid ground and guided us on the way forward for this important process.

Madame President,

The Group of 77 and China acknowledge the governance and regulatory gaps in managing marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction; among the most significant issues covered by UNCLOS is the protection of the marine environment and marine scientific research. The Preamble of the UNCLOS recognizes "the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment"

The Group of 77 and China was proudly one of the main driving forces - in collaborations with other partners - in reaching this important juncture, we believe that we are far behind in giving oceans the proper attention they deserve, it is about time to switch gears after lengthy and comprehensive discussions. We should all work together in good faith within this new format to efficiently fulfill our mandate of elaborating the text of an International legally binding instrument on BBNJ with a view

to develop such instrument as soon as possible.

Madame President,

On the organizational matters in hands, the Group of 77 and China would like to express its preliminary positions at this stage. The Group of G77 and China has strong preference that the proposed organization of work of the first and all coming sessions should avoid holding any parallel meetings, in order to ensure inclusive participations by all delegations.

The group of 77 and China would also stress the importance of the use of the six official languages in conducting the work of the IGC, as provided for by the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

The group of 77 and China believe that the IGC should adopt the Rules of Procedure as agreed in resolution 72/249; we trust that this matter has been already settled during the negotiations of this resolution, which was adopted by consensus. An established bureau should serve to assist the president and facilitate the work of the IGC; we believe that two to three representatives per regional group might be an appropriate option.

As for the process for the preparation of the zero draft of the legally binding instrument, the Group of 77 and China trust in the wisdom of the President in advancing this process following the right pace, as well as using all available resources including the Report of the PrepCom, which was submitted to the IGC, in providing an ambitious document that can serve as the basis for future deliberations during the IGC's first session in September. The group of 77 and China would appreciate the circulation of such a document as early as possible before the next meeting.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China would like to reaffirm its readiness to continue to address constructively the topics identified in the package agreed in 2011 together and as a whole. We would like to reiterate our commitment to fully engage in productive discussion at the next stage of this process.

I thank you.