



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR THEMBILE JOYINI, LEGAL ADVISER, PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE MEETING OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE WHOLE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE REGULAR PROCESS FOR GLOBAL REPORTING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS (New York, 8 September 2015)**

Co-Chairs,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Distinguished Members of the Group of Experts,  
Representatives of International Organizations and other observers,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

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

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate Ms. Fernanda Millicay and Mr. Joao Madureira for having been reappointed Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Regular Process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment including its socioeconomic aspects. Continuity has been an important factor in steering this endeavour, and we trust on your able leadership for the work we have ahead of us.

We would like to thank the presence of the Under Secretary for Legal Affairs and the Legal Counsel, Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares.

Co Chairs,

Since the beginning, when the IOC and UNEP presented the " Assessment of Assessment ", the G77 and China actively engaged in the design and establishment of the Regular Process. The Group was always committed to a format that would make the products of the Regular Process very sound in scientific terms and also preserving the intergovernmental aspect of it, one that would also allow for the full participation of developing countries.

The Group was also interested in ensuring that the outputs be policy-neutral, and assess the existing basic knowledge, identify knowledge gaps, identify capacity building needs and contribute to capacity building and the transfer of technology.

So, sound scientific knowledge and a good baseline for evaluating capacity building needs, together with the principles of inclusiveness and transparency adopted by the General Assembly, were key to ensure the relevance, legitimacy and credibility of the Regular Process and that all stakeholders accept their products as authoritative.

Co Chairs,

What we have in front of us today, the First Global Integrated Assessment, is the effort of several years of very dedicated work done by the Group of Experts, the writing teams, Secretariat and the Bureau.

The First Global Assessment encompasses a Summary and 55 chapters that all of us should

convey to our competent authorities and competent international organizations, and also take into account in other intergovernmental processes, such as the Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

Something that in the beginning was believed to be difficult to achieve was nevertheless achieved. But we need to examine what worked well and what aspects presented challenges. We thank the Bureau for proposing an agenda item " lessons learned ", because it will allow us to do that examination.

Co-chairs

We will engage in the lessons learned exercise, but allow me to advance some comments on behalf of my Group:

- the manner in which the scientific work has been conducted and the steering of the process by Member States seem to have worked well. Aspects such as more fluid mechanisms for the appointment of scientists to the pool of experts will have to be considered, but we believe the First Global Marine Assessment shows the scientific work tried to avoid incurring in policy-making, while the work of Member States tried to avoid interfering with science. On this, a particular recognition to the fluid interaction, during the intersessional periods, between the Group of Experts and the Bureau; and

- now going to the challenges, the biggest one was what the G77 and China was always concerned about: scarcity of financial resources. My Group has always proposed to consider the allocation of resources from the regular budget. It did not appear to us that it was reasonable to rely only on voluntary contributions for such a big undertaking. One example of our collective accommodation to this approach was that the Summary is the only chapter of the Assessment that was translated into all official languages. The fact that all other 55 chapters are in English might limit the usefulness of the Assessment to decision makers. And there were many other accommodations, so not relying only on voluntary contributions is still our view. The fact that the First Global Marine Assessment was possible does not mean it did not encounter notable challenges, many of which had to do with the lack of resources. In this regard, we also continue to support providing additional resources to further strengthen the capacity of DOALOS, in particular its human resources, to enable it to continue to provide us with the current quality of work of the Secretariat of the Regular Process.

As I said, in the "lessons learned" agenda item we will make more comments and engage with other Member States in drawing conclusions that could be useful for the format of the next cycle of the Regular Process.

Co Chairs,

The G77 and China would like to recognize the Secretariats of Intergovernmental Organizations that have contributed to the work of the Regular Process, including sponsoring the regional workshops, in particular the IOC and UNEP.

Co Chairs,

We must pay the well deserved tribute to the writing teams, many of which are scientists from the Pool of Experts. All of them undertook this important work on top of their daily responsibilities and without any reward but our collective recognition.

A special word on the Group of Experts. When the Group was established to be appointed by

Member States, the ideal was to ensure scientists from developed and developing countries, from all regions, would work together. Not everybody was happy with that format in those early days. But the product of all these years of work shows their commitment as a well integrated group and also shows remarkable personal effort. We are aware of the fact that many of its Members undertook more responsibilities than originally envisaged, that only reflects their remarkable professionalism. The G77 and China wishes to pay tribute to the Members of the Group of Experts who, as always, are here with us today.

And finally DOALOS, a highly competent group of professionals that stretched their scarce resources to perform as the Secretariat of the Regular Process and, also in their case, undertake more responsibilities than originally envisaged. Our especial recognition to Ms. Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli's team, very particularly, if I may, to Mrs. Annebeth Rosenboom.

Co Chairs,

The G77 and China is very pleased to see the outcome of so much effort. The First Global Integrated Marine Assessment shows that the United Nations are capable of delivering a product of high scientific quality that is accepted by the international community as a credible baseline of the status of the marine environment.

I thank you for your attention.