



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. EMAD MORCOS MATTAR, COUNSELOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA ON THE THEME "ANTHROPOGENIC UNDERWATER NOISE" (New York, 18 June 2018)**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, please allow me once again to extend our congratulations for your appointment as Co-chairs of the nineteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea on the theme "Anthropogenic Underwater Noise". I would also like to assure you of the Group's full support throughout the meeting. I am confident that, under your able guidance, the process will yield a fruitful outcome.
3. The Group of 77 and China recognize the primary role of the Informal Consultative Process in integrating knowledge, exchanging of opinions and coordinating among multiple stakeholders and competent agencies, as well as enhancing awareness of various topics related to oceans, including emerging issues. We underscore the need to continue to strengthen and improve the Informal Consultative Process' effectiveness as a unique forum for comprehensive discussions on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea.
4. The Group of 77 and China would like also to thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report, which provides us with an overview on "Anthropogenic Underwater Noise", their nature, sources, and related environmental and socioeconomic aspects, as well as the current cooperation and coordination activities with regard to addressing this matter. This report will serve as a valuable background for Members States during our discussions.

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5. UNCLOS has laid down the fundamental obligation of all States to protect and preserve the marine environment while respecting the rights and freedoms enshrined therein. It further urged all States to co-operate on a global basis and, as appropriate, on a regional basis, directly or through competent international organizations, in formulating and elaborating international rules, standards and recommended practices and procedures consistent with this Convention, for the protection and preservation of the marine environment, taking into account characteristic regional features.
6. Scientific society still lack considerable research activities related to anthropogenic underwater noise and have not yet properly and significantly studied their impacts as well as the presence of any collateral and undetermined effects.
7. There is a need to carefully investigate how deep anthropogenic underwater noise might be affecting the natural underwater eco-system, including the migration paths of travelling mammals, which rely on sound for communication, prey detection and predator avoidance, as well as the behavior of the larvae of a broad range of coral reef fish families that are attracted to noises as they use sound to find suitable habitats during their settlement stage.

8. Conducting a comprehensive acoustic base-line study would be of a great value, as it will provide true and realistic scientific evidences of the current anthropogenic underwater noise levels, this study to be combined with a long-term monitoring program to track future changes in ocean noise. Acoustic data should be included in global ocean observing systems.

9. The setting-up of in-situ acoustic listening stations along strategic locations can provide real-time acoustic observations for occurrences of excessive underwater noise emission. The data gathered will be useful for many strategic and economic aims. It could also enable, if needed, proper enforcement, mitigation and enhanced of future acoustic-noise regulations.

10. Research should adopt a multi-species approach within the priority areas to quantify the species' spatial distribution and changes in behavior in relation to levels of sound at the source, levels of sound at set distances from the source, and received sound levels.

11. Creating a detailed map of the distribution of economically and ecologically important marine species; especially endangered species, in addition, of the establishment of marine protected areas for habitats, as well as migratory routes, of the marine species sensitive to underwater noise, could serve to mitigate any possible impacts of anthropogenic underwater noises, as well as to plan and manage different marine activities.

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12. The Group of 77 and China would like to stress the importance of taking in consideration and to coordinate international activities addressing anthropogenic under water noise, in this context I would like to recall steps taken by relevant international organizations and entities. 13. In April 2014, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) approved the Guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life (MEPC.1/Circ.833). These non-mandatory guidelines are intended to provide general advice to designers, shipbuilders and ship operators.

14. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity convened an Expert Workshop on Underwater Noise and its Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity in 2014, with a view to improving and sharing knowledge on underwater noise and its impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity, and developing practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity, including marine mammals, in order to assist Parties and other Governments in applying management measures, as appropriate.

15. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity encouraged Parties and other Governments as well as indigenous and local communities and other relevant stakeholders, to take appropriate measures, as appropriate and within their competencies, and in accordance with national and international laws, to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity.

16. The Group of 77 and China commend these efforts, and encourage all relevant international and regional organizations as well as member states and civil society to share their knowledge and exchange experiences, The Group of 77 and China underline the importance that necessary efforts are exerted to encourage capacity building and technologies transfer programs to assist developing states to build their own national programs to monitor and study the possible impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise.

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17. Last but not least, the Group of 77 and China wish to stress the importance of States' contribution to the voluntary trust fund established for the purpose of assisting developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island developing States and landlocked developing States in attending the meetings of the ICP. In this regard, we wish to call upon States, which are in a position make additional contribution to do so and also thank States, which have contributed. This is key to making this process most meaningful and inclusive as well as promoting capacity building for developing countries on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea.

Co-Chairs,

18. Finally, I would like to reiterate that the Group of 77 and China stands ready to support you and constructively engage in this process.

I thank you.