

## **Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands Statement – Governance of Marine Ecosystems and Uses in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction**

Summary: April 25, 2008: STATEMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS AD HOC OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL WORKING GROUP TO STUDY ISSUES RELATING TO THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION ON GOVERNANCE OF MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND USES IN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION BY DR. BILIANA CICIN-SAIN, CO-CHAIR AND HEAD OF SECRETARIAT, ON BEHALF OF THE GLOBAL FORUM ON OCEANS, COASTS, AND ISLANDS (New York)

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

I am speaking on behalf of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, which has, since 2005, been engaged in an informal process to bring together major relevant interests to facilitate open and constructive multi-stakeholder policy dialogue to inform and support the formal processes that have been or may be established by the United Nations General Assembly regarding governance of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. Based on numerous consultations through its Working Group on Governance of Marine Ecosystems and Uses in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, the Global Forum would like to emphasize that:

1. There is an urgent need to effectively manage ocean areas within and across national boundaries in an integrated manner, in view of strong evidence of threats to our life-support system and security due to added vulnerabilities of ecosystems caused by climate change and the associated impacts on broader ecosystem functions from current uses of resources in these areas. In this context, there is a compelling need to ensure the development and implementation of effective mechanisms for cooperation in generating the knowledge needed for adequate management of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.
2. There is a need for coordination and cooperation nationally, regionally and globally, both at the intergovernmental as well as the governmental levels, in order to achieve integrated outcomes, if marine areas beyond national jurisdiction are to be managed sustainably for the benefit of current and future generations.
3. There is a need to adapt management measures to the specific nature, needs and opportunities presented by given ocean spaces in given time frames, through a holistic approach. Area-based management measures are important tools for implementing the ecosystem approach in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, for the mutual benefits of all concerned stakeholders.

4. Marine genetic resources are currently the subject of many discussions in relation to access and the potential for their applications such as pharmaceuticals and industrial processes, as well as with regard to the sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization. Their legal status is also being discussed. These discussions should continue in appropriate fora.

5. UNCLOS provides the legal framework for addressing any possible governance, regulatory or implementation gap related to marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. In this context, there is a need to ensure a package of measures aimed at implementing integration, while also promoting sectoral approaches, in relation to marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. These measures should be seen as distributed along a continuum, each involving a greater level of formality/degree of institutionalization.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

In consideration of the special issues involved in the management of marine genetic resources, the Global Forum strongly recommends the need to:

- Identify: a) potential benefits from research and commercialization of marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction; b) options for benefit sharing, including learning from case studies on best practices; c) modalities for promoting equitable use
- Promote continued and focused marine scientific research
- Identify means of data banking, knowledge management and sharing: the biotech industry should provide information on where the samples of organisms identified to be of medicinal, industrial, other value, have been collected, for management and conservation purposes
- Involve the biotech industry in the planning process
- Facilitate government-to-government discussions, especially between developed and developing nations
- Identify and assess management options, which are potentially applicable in addressing the threats to marine genetic resources, including codes of conduct, permits and environmental impact assessment, area-based management, and ecosystem-based management, for adoption across sectors and regions
- Conduct economic analysis; analysis of comparative advantage
- Form partnerships and formal agreements of collaboration, including Memoranda of Understanding.

The Global Forum reiterates its commitment to support the formal processes established by the United Nations to consider the issues of governing marine areas beyond national jurisdiction through its multi-stakeholder dialogues in order to facilitate interchange on the more contentious issues and to raise awareness about issues in the governance of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction in view of its importance for the future of mankind.

Thank you.

