



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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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
AREAS OF NATIONAL JURISDICTION**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK
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Co-Chairs,

At the outset, my delegation wishes to express its pleasure at your continued stewardship of this very important Working Group and to offer our cooperation in achieving a productive outcome.

We also wish to state that we fully support the views expressed by the distinguished Representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

As my delegation participates in this sixth and critical meeting of the Working Group, we do so mindful of the fact that the alarm bells continue to sound on the myriad threats being posed, largely by human activity, to the world's oceans. At the same time, we are heartened by the outcome of last year's Rio+20 Summit wherein the international community demonstrated renewed political commitment to enable the sustainable use of the oceans and their resources for present and future generations.

Critically, the General Assembly has been charged with maintaining the political momentum by taking concrete action in relation to Oceans. The clear and unequivocal mandate for the Assembly is urgent in addressing BBNJ issues, including taking a decision on the development of an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, before the end of its sixty-ninth session. With this in mind,

maintaining the status quo in our Working Group is clearly no longer an option.

The Jamaica delegation therefore welcomes the opportunity, as presented under Agenda Item 5, to engage in open and fruitful discussions that will lead to the fulfillment of the Rio mandate. This mandate assumes greater urgency for Jamaica as a vulnerable Small-Island Developing State, particularly in light of the Third International SIDS Conference to be held next year, where activities related to oceans will be central to the discussions. In addition, as the follow-up processes for the Rio +20 continue within the General Assembly, we are mindful of the call for Oceans to be included in the elaboration of a set of Sustainable Development Goals.

Co-Chairs,

We are pleased that this Working Group, the only forum in which all aspects of biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction are dealt with, has over the past years contributed to increasing our knowledge and understanding of the issues relating^{to} BBNJ. The two intersessional workshops held this past May were particularly useful in improving understanding and clarifying key questions. We join in thanking the Co-Chairs for their summary of the proceedings of the workshops.

The workshops also served to underscore that as we progress on this issue, we must continue to bear in mind that all countries, regardless of size or level of development, are able to access and benefit from the oceans. There must be a level playing field between developed and developing countries and this can best be achieved if attention is given to transparency, capacity-building, and the transfer of technology. Developing countries also need access to advanced scientific processes, so as to develop and utilize marine genetic resources, or conduct the necessary environmental impact assessments regarding BBNJ.

Fishing and overfishing, ocean acidification, coral bleaching and their impact on marine genetic resources, among other things, continue to put our oceans at risk. In this regard, it is important that our work continues to reinforce the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol while ensuring coherence with the roles and programmes of the FAO, the WTO and the WHO in the proposed work and scope of an implementing agreement. At the same time, account could be taken of relevant regional programmes, which could also provide a basis for regional best practices.

It should be noted that Jamaica is committed to Marine Protected Areas. As part of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, Jamaica has undertaken to

preserve 20 per cent of its marine space. We are already making good progress in this regard.

Finally, Jamaica wishes to underscore that the principle of the common heritage of mankind as contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is critical to this process. This principle is essential to ensuring that all countries are eligible to accessing the benefits of the ocean.

This is becoming clear as we note with satisfaction that a number of developed and developing countries are moving to exploit the deep seabed and the subsoil thereof as the work of the International Seabed Authority progresses into a new phase. This will have implications for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. Jamaica, therefore, reiterates that it is fully supportive of early action in relation to an international instrument as part of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and for this to be undertaken as a priority.

I thank you.