

**5th UN WG BBNJ**  
**May 7th, 2012**  
**NRDC & DSCC Opening statement**

This intervention is being given on behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition.

Offer our appreciation, and condolences, to the co-chairs. We have listened with great interest to the discussion thus far, and note in particular the interventions of the G.77 and China; EU, Australia, Norway, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and others.

As a number of delegations have noted, many of the same issues under discussion this week have been extensively debated over the course of the past 6 years in both previous meetings of the BBNJ working group as well as the UNICP and in other fora.

We can discuss and debate these issues for another 6 years, or we can begin to work to address the gaps and problems that we have spent the last 6 years talking about.

In our view, we believe it is critically important for this group to recommend that the UN General Assembly agree to establish a formal process of negotiation for an implementing agreement of UNCLOS for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and the protection and preservation of the marine environment in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We believe these negotiations need to get underway on an urgent basis and in this regard, in our view, the workshops should be held in 2012 if possible, back to back as part of a formal negotiating process established by the UNGA.

We note that during the negotiation of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, informal working groups were established on two issues and both groups met on more than one occasion during the Fish Stocks negotiations. This might be a model for our work in this group.

Again, we would encourage all delegations to come to an agreement this week to recommend that the General Assembly establish a formal negotiating process and allow the international community to move forward with the vital task of ensuring the coordinated regulation and effective management of activities to conserve biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of all.

Finally, several of us attended the Rio+20 preparatory negotiations here last week. We concur with the sentiments expressed by a number of delegations that should the meeting of the Working Group this week fail to move us forward, the negotiations continue in the context of the Rio+20 Conference, including, as need be, by Heads of State.