

**UN BBNJ working group
Greenpeace Statement
August 2013**

Thank you co-chairs,

I speak on behalf of Greenpeace. I would like to support the statement given by the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and the High seas Alliance of which Greenpeace is a founding member.

At the Rio+20 Summit in June last year, protecting the world's oceans was clearly recognized by Heads of State and government as a major global objective. Today we welcome the statements of the overwhelming majority of States in support of initiating negotiations of an agreement for biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction by the 69th General Assembly, and urge that this meeting recommends concrete political action to that effect. Ensuring healthy and productive oceans is the only way to secure the diversity of life on the planet, blue ecosystem services and basic food security for millions of people.

The many years of deliberations within this working group have provided sufficient analysis of the gaps, problems and threats facing our oceans. Outside of these conference rooms however, the oceans are rapidly being emptied of life and their diversity is threatened by acidification and pollution, overfishing and destructive fishing practices and now the looming threat of deep sea mining that could cause further irreversible damage.

The time has come to show political will to move forward. To inspire confidence that you are working towards **solutions**, further deliberations on these crucial matters must become part of a negotiating process with the task of filling the gaps and loopholes and ensure a sustainable and equitable future for the marine environment and the people who depend on it.

Unless you act to set the framework for oceans protection, your government's obligation to conserve the marine environment set by UNCLOS and the repeated commitments, including the overdue Johannesburg Programme of Action (JPOI) to establish a network of marine protected

areas by 2012 and the agreement in Nagoya to protect 10% of the oceans by 2020, will remain empty words. Clear progress is currently being made within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to identify ecologically and biologically significant areas (EBSAs), with regional workshops held worldwide to identify EBSAs on the high seas. The CBD's EBSA reports are available, as agreed in Nagoya, to the UN General Assembly to take the necessary action.

The Rio+20 Summit set a deadline for the UN General Assembly to act.

We urge you to recommend that the General Assembly fast-tracks the development of an agreement for biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, before a tipping point is reached where damage to marine life becomes irreversible.

Thank you