

5th UN WG BBNJ
May 7th, 2012
Greenpeace Opening statement

Thank you co-chairs,

I would like to support the statement given by NRDC on behalf of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition of which Greenpeace is a member.

Distinguished delegates, the 5th meeting of BBNJ happens in the middle of the road to the Rio+20 Earth Summit. We have been following the Rio negotiations closely and are encouraged to see the vast majority of states **joining** their voices in support of an implementing agreement under UNCLOS. These governments have recognized wisely that the high seas, the least protected areas of our planet, are **essential** to ensure biological diversity, ecosystem services and food security into the future and must be protected.

Continuing business as usual through Ad-hoc informal discussions on such a crucial issue for the planet is not an option. We are now well into 2012 - the deadline set by your governments in 2002 World Summit, to establish a global network of Marine Protected Areas. Unless there is concrete progress to initiate negotiations for an implementing agreement to put in place the necessary framework and tools to protect areas in the high seas, your governments commitments will remain empty promises and the oceans will continue to be in peril.

This 5th BBNJ must send a strong signal of support for an implementing agreement and recommend that the 67th UNGA initiates negotiations in 2013. Workshops should be structured to support the negotiating process towards an implementing agreement. As part of the negotiating process they would be very

beneficial in particular on marine protected areas and reserves (MPAs/MRs), environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) and access to and benefit sharing of marine genetic resources (MGRs).

Distinguished Delegates – Agreeing to launch an agreement in Rio for marine life in the high seas is key for environmental NGOs and our members and is recognized widely as one of the major outcomes that would make Rio+20 memorable regarding oceans. Some governments wanted to wait for this BBNJ meeting to inform their take on Rio negotiations. Now is the opportunity for these governments to show us that they are committed to making meaningful progress for the protection of the oceans and join the majority of states in filling the governance gaps.

We urge you to move together towards an agreement that will enable you to meet your commitment and responsibility to protect the oceans.

Thank you.