

Agenda Item 7

Day 3

WWF statement on MGRs

Chair,

As this is the first time WWF takes the floor, I firstly would like to congratulate you on your appointment.

Ladies and gentlemen, WWF would also like to congratulate all delegates for getting to the point of having a preparatory committee.

WWF is here to assist delegates in negotiating an agreement with the package at its core. Marine genetic resources are at the center of this package.

We appreciate that there have long been two irreconcilable views regarding MGRs in these discussions, based on the different regimes that apply to the High Seas and to the Area. We are really taken by the idea of negotiating a new sui generis regime that recognises that MGRs know no boundaries, based on principles from both the High Seas and the Area regimes.

WWF is keen to see benefit sharing and access included as major components of a MGR regime. This cannot be achieved unless we can find a way forward from these two differing positions and we believe that finding a novel, fit for purpose MGR regime is the only way to resolve this dilemma.

Such a new regime is needed not only:

- To deal with the biological reality that much – but not all - genetic material may be found in both ABNJ domains (as well as within national jurisdictions), but also
- To develop benefit-sharing arrangements that respect UNCLOS research freedoms while recognising UNCLOS conservation and development obligations and opportunities.

To this end, WWF has offered a paper on MGRs, which will be on the DOALOS website, and also can be found at the front of the room, where we have started to develop our ideas on the questions that need to be resolved in the development of a sui generis regime.

Thank you, Chair.