

29 March 2016

ABMTs working group

Statement by the Pew Charitable Trusts

Thank you, Madam Facilitator. On behalf of the Pew Charitable Trusts we would like join others to congratulate you on your appointment as facilitator and thank the New Zealand delegation for their leadership of this group throughout the PrepCom.

We are happy to hear a broad array of countries highlighting the critical role that Marine Protected Areas play in conserving marine biodiversity.

We would like to briefly express our view that the objective of the Agreement should be to establish a global network of ecologically representative and effectively managed marine protected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

And a definition of MPAs should, at a minimum, be broad enough to include the range of management options, including marine reserves -- as there is a growing body of science points to the importance of large-scale, no-take, fully protected marine reserves as a key component of ocean management to effectively conserve biodiversity, protect ecosystems, and build resilience to climate change in the world's oceans, including ABNJ.

With respect to process, we are encouraged by the detail and commonalities among the interventions thus far, including by Costa Rica and Monaco, the EU, the Pacific Small Island Developing States, and others.

In particular, we agree fully that the ABMT process should include review by an appropriate scientific body and a decision to be taken by a global decision-making body, such as a Conference of Parties to the new Agreement, specifically in consultation with existing regional and sectoral organizations so as not undermine their respective mandates.

Scientific review will be critical to ensure that the proposed protected area and corresponding conservation measures are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the agreement, and based on the best scientific information.

Concerning the point you raised regarding implementation, while the new Agreement should not undermine existing regional and sectoral organizations, several delegations have acknowledged the gaps in both governance and implementation of the current system.

This suggests that while relevant organizations should have a role in developing ABMTs, implementation cannot be left exclusively in their hands. On the contrary, we believe that addressing these gaps requires a mechanism to adopt measures that are both legally binding on its parties and globally applicable and we would like to call attention to our analysis of different options for institutional arrangements entitled "Towards a Global Solution for High Seas Conservation" -- copies of which are available at the front of the room and has been submitted to the Chair and DOALAS as part of the rolling submissions for the Chair's non-paper.

Such a mechanism will be best positioned to fill gaps, provide for accountability and deliver a regime that is truly comprehensive and global as called for in resolution 69/292.

Thank you for your consideration.