



High Seas Alliance Opening Statement to PrepCom4 July 10, 2017

Thank you Mr. Chair, I am honored to speak for Mission Blue on behalf of the High Seas Alliance, and its 35 member organizations, including Greenpeace, Natural Resources Defense Council, Pew Charitable Trusts, WWF, and The Nature Conservancy and we align with the statement from IUCN. We thank you for your leadership that has brought us to this point, and to you, your team and DOALOS for the hard work during the intersessional period to provide the indicative list of suggestions which will be very helpful in the PrepCom's deliberations to develop recommendations to the General Assembly, as well as for the Chair's stream-lined non-paper. We have arrived at this fourth and final PrepCom with excitement and anticipation for what we hope at the end of two weeks will be a strong ending to the PrepCom process, that is worthy of the many years of discussions and meetings, briefings, papers, workshops that all of us here, and many others, have been a part of at some point.

And It has been a long road to progress to where we are now. From the Ad hoc open ended working group meetings that first convened in 2006 and spanned nine years, to the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012 and the commitment there by governments to take a decision on developing a new instrument, followed by the Jan. 2015 agreement on a snowy night to proceed with the PrepCom process, and the adoption of Resolution 69/292. Resolution 69/292 has guided our work through three PrepCom meetings and now points the way to the next step: an Intergovernmental Conference to negotiate the new instrument.

Mr. Chair, the time has now come for action. As we conclude the Preparatory process, it is essential that PrepCom recommendations to the UN General Assembly include a recommendation to convene an intergovernmental conference to begin in 2018, so that we can continue the momentum and finalize and adopt a legally binding instrument to protect marine life in ABNJ. We therefore strongly support the statements calling for this recommendation, including Algeria on behalf of African group, Nauru, Mexico on behalf of like-minded States, Monaco, Morocco and Sudan. We also support the statements in support of convening an Intergovernmental Conference in 2018, made by the European Union, Costa Rica, and Tonga.

We are heartened by the many statements noting the significant progress we have made during this Preparatory process and overwhelming support for moving to an Intergovernmental conference as soon as possible. With half of the planet at stake, this will be our defining moment for the ocean --- a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the course of this massive biosphere that makes our beautiful blue planet habitable.

Thank you very much.