



Intergovernmental conference for the development of a new international legally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction under the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea, second session.

**United Nations, New York
25 March 2019**

Statement delivered by the Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative

Re: Marine Genetic Resources (agenda item 6)

3.2.2. Sharing of benefits

Thank you Madam Facilitator.

The Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative welcomes this opportunity to provide comments on the sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources (MGR) – noting that these are part of marine biodiversity.

- i) **Regarding 'benefits'**, facilitating access to MGR (*in situ*, samples *ex situ*, or associated data, information and knowledge) is a benefit as noted in '*Benefits Option II*'. For example, the integration and linking of different data types (from taxonomic and occurrence information to any downstream genetic analysis) with a sample helps to safeguard the scientific value of the sample.
- ii) **Regarding modalities of benefit sharing:**
Benefit-sharing is inextricably linked to scientific research, technology transfer and related capacity building, as noted in *Objectives Option I (c)(d) and (i)*; and in *Benefit-sharing modalities Option II (4)(b)(c)(e) and (f)*. Because of this link, scientific researchers can play a crucial role in benefit-sharing (as contributors as well as beneficiaries), and we welcome the recognition of this in *Benefit-sharing modalities Option II (2) Option C*.

Given that sampling the deep sea, particularly in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), is technologically challenging and costly, measures to facilitate open access to samples and data are critical for the scientific community – and numerous collaborative initiatives are already in place to enable the availability of samples and data. **Such initiatives, in line with existing scientific best practices**, offer modalities of benefit-sharing that can be built upon and further strengthened through the BBNJ agreement.

Furthermore, scientific best practices, could be streamlined - for example, while science operates in an increasingly open access arena - there is room for further improvement **and my delegation will provide specific suggestions relating to facilitated access at the appropriate point of the agenda.**

- iii) In addition to access to samples and data, the scientific community can support benefit-sharing through: cooperation in scientific research to advance knowledge; sharing of information and knowledge; training and education programs, including in molecular techniques and associated data analysis; and access to equipment and research infrastructure.

- iv) **Regarding actors in the scientific community who can deliver and participate in benefit-sharing** - research institutions, collections, biorepositories, and other scientific organisations at national, regional and global scales all play a role. **Networks**, play a crucial role in sharing benefits by enabling collaboration between these actors, knowledge exchange, and advancing best-practices (for example through the development of data standards). Enhancing cooperation to increase scientific capacity for all can build on these existing mechanisms, **but will require adequate resources and tools**.

- v) One such tool could be a **clearinghouse mechanism**, as noted in the document. A clearinghouse mechanism could support several measures to strengthen scientific best practices, as outlined in *Clearinghouse* Option I (1)(2). For example consolidating the notification of research cruises and resulting samples as well as providing documentation, guidance, and links to relevant databases would support transparency, best practices and capacity building. The Ocean Data and Information System currently being developed by IOC-UNESCO is an example of how such a mechanism could evolve. An effective and sustainable clearinghouse will require careful design as well as sufficient technical, human, and financial resources for implementation.

In relation to access to data [as a modality of benefit-sharing] a clearinghouse mechanism should be aligned and integrated with existing systems; therefore success of the clearinghouse will hinge on [maintaining and in some cases strengthening] **support for, access to and awareness of existing data systems**.

Thank you Madam Facilitator.