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Agenda item 77 (a) of the preliminary list*

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 30 June 2011 from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to the President of the General Assembly

Pursuant to paragraph 163 of General Assembly resolution 65/37 A, we were appointed as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, which was established pursuant to paragraph 73 of Assembly resolution 59/24. In accordance with paragraph 163 of Assembly resolution 65/37 A, the Working Group met at United Nations Headquarters from 31 May to 3 June 2011.

We are pleased to inform you that the Working Group fulfilled its mandate to provide recommendations to the General Assembly as requested in resolution 65/37 A, and have the honour to submit to you the outcome of the meeting, which consists of the recommendations adopted by the Working Group for transmittal to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session (sect. I) and a Co Chairs' summary of discussions (sect. II) on key issues, ideas and proposals raised during the deliberations under the various agenda items (see A/AC.276/4).

We request that you kindly circulate the present letter, including the recommendations and the Co-Chairs' summary of discussions (see annex), as a document of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under item 77 (a) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Palitha T. B. Kohona
Liesbeth Lijnzaad
Co-Chairs

* A/66/50.

Annex

Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction and Co-Chairs' summary of discussions

I. Recommendations

1. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, having met from 31 May to 3 June 2011 in accordance with paragraph 163 of General Assembly resolution 65/37 A, recommends that:

(a) A process be initiated, by the General Assembly, with a view to ensuring that the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction effectively addresses those issues by identifying gaps and ways forward, including through the implementation of existing instruments and the possible development of a multilateral agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;

(b) This process would address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular, together and as a whole, marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, and environmental impact assessments, capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology;

(c) This process would take place: (i) in the existing Working Group; and (ii) in the format of intersessional workshops aimed at improving understanding of the issues and clarifying key questions as an input to the work of the Working Group;

(d) The mandate of the Working Group be reviewed and, as appropriate, amended, with a view to undertaking the tasks entrusted by the present recommendations;

(e) The Secretary-General be requested to convene a meeting of the Working Group in 2012 to make progress on all issues under examination within the Working Group and to provide recommendations to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

II. Co-Chairs' summary of discussions*

2. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (the "Working Group") met at United Nations Headquarters, from 31 May to 3 June 2011. In accordance with paragraph 163 of resolution 65/37 A, the Working Group was convened to provide recommendations to the General Assembly.

* The summary is intended for reference purposes only and not as a record of the discussions.