



## IUCN Closing Statement

**Sixth meeting of the Working Group on Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction, ,  
UN Headquarters, New York City, 19-23 August 2013**

Thank you Co-Chairs,

IUCN would like to congratulate the Member States for their draft recommendations made to the General Assembly which reaffirm their commitment to Paragraph 162 of the Rio+20 outcomes, and welcomes the progress made to address, on an urgent basis, the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including a decision on the development of an international instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

IUCN further welcomes the decision to establish an explicit and specific process within this Working Group to prepare for a decision to be taken at the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, and the determination to work towards an agreement on scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument under the Law of the Sea Convention.

IUCN considers that this gives an opportunity to adhere to the momentum created by Rio+20, and urges this body not to foreclose to take a decision sooner than the 69<sup>th</sup> session, keeping in mind the urgency of the subject being addressed by this body.

IUCN would also like to profoundly express its respect for the work of the United Nations and its Member States undertaken within this Working Group.

At the same time, we would like to remind Paragraph 76 (h) of the Rio+20 outcome document “The future we want” which clearly states that States have agreed to

*“Enhance the participation and effective engagement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the relevant international forums and, in this regard, promote transparency and broad public participation and partnerships to implement sustainable development”.*

IUCN is deeply concerned that through the closure of the informal session of this Working Group meeting to NGO and IGO observers, States have not lived up to their Rio+20 commitments.

In this context, we would also like to remind the ongoing support to this Working Group provided by NGOs and IGOs, as well as the technical expertise and substantive input provided by civil society through their presentations at the intersessional workshops held in May 2013, a valuable contribution which was repeatedly recalled by States in their statements during this meeting of the Working Group.

IUCN therefore urges Member States to recognize the importance of involving civil society in the substantive discussions of the Working Group, and to take advantage of further technical expert advice and views during the future process.

Honorable Co-Chairs, based on our concerns regarding the lack of transparency experienced during this meeting of the Working Group, IUCN would like to make the following suggestions on how to move forward, namely

→ a) to respect Rule 60 of the UN Rules of Procedure which states that

*“The meetings of the General Assembly and its Main Committees shall be **held in public** unless the organ concerned decides that **exceptional** circumstances require that the meeting be held in private.”*

→ And b) to establish a formalized process which allows States as well as civil society to make online submissions before future meetings in order to facilitate the preparation of delegations in advance, as well as to allow more substantive discussions during the meetings. It is of utmost importance to us that effective channels are established for the provision of substantive input into the future process.

Finally, distinguished Co-Chairs, allow me to close this statement by reminding Member States once more of the key role oceans play in sustaining life on our planet and the urgent need to maintain and conserve the resilience of the oceans’ resistance to human impacts especially in light of climate change and ocean acidification. IUCN expresses its confidence in the Member States to live up to their responsibilities in the future.

Thank you very much!