

Thank you, Madame Chair. My name is Ana Barreira with the International Institute for Law and the Environment, speaking on behalf of the NGO Major Group.

We welcome the draft decision on Oceans submitted by Colombia. We are concerned by the continued threat of human activities on the planet's marine environment and biodiversity. We believe that Regional Seas Conventions can and must play an important role in the conservation of marine biodiversity beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. Regional approaches can also improve our understanding of the impact of climate change on oceans and seas.

We consider that the preamble of this draft decision on Oceans should take into account UN General Assembly resolution 67/78 on "Oceans and the Law of the Sea", adopted on 11 December 2012.

The draft decision on Oceans makes a call on members of the Regional Seas Conventions to improve implementation. As we noted yesterday in regards to the draft decision on governance, justice and law, implementation, compliance and enforcement are paramount for the effectiveness of internationally agreed commitments. For this reason, we believe the draft decision on Ocean should include:

First, a call to the governing bodies of Regional Seas Conventions to establish compliance committees, following the model of the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the marine environment and the coastal region of the Mediterranean.

Second, a call to Regional Seas Conventions that such compliance committees, once established, be open to full stakeholder participation. We respectfully propose that stakeholders enjoy the right to submit communications regarding cases of non-compliance to the compliance committees of Regional Seas Conventions, in order to improve their implementation.

We believe that decisive action is needed at the regional level in order to avoid the continuing deterioration of our oceans. In this regard, stakeholder involvement in compliance is critical to the effective implementation of Regional Seas Conventions.

Thank you for your attention.