



**Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding
instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on
the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas
beyond national jurisdiction**

Fourth Session

Remarks

by Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares

Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and

United Nations Legal Counsel,

Secretary-General of the Conference

7 March 2022

(Conference Room 4)

Distinguished President of the Conference,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I address you today in person to welcome you to the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, convened pursuant to resolution 72/249 and decision 75/570.



2020 was to be the super year for the ocean. However, the fourth session of the Conference was postponed along with other major ocean-related meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions.

Meanwhile, threats to the ocean, and the urgency to address them, continued to increase.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Since the third session of the Conference, the Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate provided new evidence of the urgency of coordinated and ambitious action to address changes in the ocean and cryosphere.

Reinforcing the findings of the IPCC, the Second World Ocean Assessment, released in 2021, reports that, although many pressures from human activities continue to degrade the ocean, some responses for mitigating or reducing pressures and impacts on the ocean are improving. It further stresses that sustainable use of the ocean can be achieved only through improved coordination and cooperation.

Achieving the rallying cries in the IPCC Report and the Second World Ocean Assessment will only be possible if all stakeholders work together.

The long-awaited United Nations Ocean Conference will take place in June/July. Later, the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is expected to conclude negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which will contain a new set of global goals and targets for biodiversity, including in marine and coastal areas.



This way, the Conference can send to the world a strong signal that multilateralism remains relevant and the only avenue to tackle the three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Thank you.