Marine and coastal biodiversity: ecologically or biologically significant marine areas

The International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity wish to thank the Chair for the opportunity to make this statement on behalf of IPLCs as the Marine and coastal biodiversity is very important to many of IPLCs around the world.

IIFB would like to support the work focussing on marine and coastal biodiversity. We understand that this is a crucial time to respond to the GBO4 assessment which highlights that we will not meet aspired targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity, including Target 10 in relation to coral reefs. We also honour the work of the Convention in acknowledging traditional knowledge, innovations and practices encouraging full and effective participation of IPLCs.

We refer to the Papapapaitai Declaration of the World Network of Indigenous and Local Community Land and Sea Managers Pacific Caucus at the Third International Conference on United Nations Small Island Developing States held in Apia, Samoa from 1-4 September, which calls for the continued recognition of indigenous peoples as intelligent, innovative, capable communities ready and willing to work with and fully contribute to emerging partnerships.

We further welcome the efforts to appropriately manage Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas, however in our assesses of the EBSA criteria we believe that it could be more relevant and aligned to the values of IPLCs. And we therefore support the recommendation of section 14 recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge as a source of information for describing areas meeting the EBSA criteria, and requesting the ES to facilitate the participation of IPLCs, with a view to our full and effective participation.

We believe that these workshops should be platforms for developing mutual understandings and two way capacity building.

IIFB wants to draw attention to the need to develop social and cultural criteria in describing EBSA, which currently presents a limitation to considering the human dimension of ecosystems. Criteria for the identification of areas relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in need of such enhanced measures due to their social, cultural and other significance may need to be developed, with appropriate scientific and technical rationales. Establishing a linkage between culture and biodiversity is important, given that healthy and productive marine and terrestrial ecosystems are the foundation of indigenous peoples’ cultures, traditions and identities. It is also the case that the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of IPLCs have contributed to the healthy functioning of marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Under title Marine and coastal biodiversity: Impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity of anthropogenic underwater noise and ocean acidification, priority actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems, and marine spatial planning and training initiatives,
Under section 4. (a) & (b) we request the ES to further collaborate among Parties, other Governments and relevant organisations, and add, including the IIFB and IPLCs...

We support section 12 on focussing on actions that address and in particular (c) maintaining sustainable livelihoods... and (d) increasing the capability of local and national managers...

Section 13. We request the ES to add indigenous peoples and local communities, so it would read “in collaboration with Parties, other Governments and relevant organisations, and add IPLCs, to facilitate the implementation of priority actions...”

Under section 14. we request to add IPLCs in drafting workplan on biodiversity and acidification in cold-water regions, to be consistent on including IPLCs in work in matters affecting them.

Additionally, IIFB are aware that many IPLCs are concerned about the current and potential deep sea mining activities, the effects of contamination of waste from mining areas on the marine and coastal biodiversity, and extractive industries where spawning areas which is included in the criteria under EBSA and the effects on the marine life and the cultural significance for the IPLCs. IIFB would like to place emphasis on ensuring that future workshops and meetings for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity include IPLCs with their prior, informed consent/approval and involvement and particularly the inclusion of IPLC women as they also have special responsibilities for marine harvests etc.

Madam chair, we call upon Parties to take into account the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in decision making regarding the implementation of actions in order to ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples, their practices and traditional ways of life linked to marine resources - coastal are respected

We call for parties to support our statement.

Thank you, madam chair.