

BBNJ Briefing Note

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Summary of the Organizational Session of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the BBNJ Agreement: 24-26 June 2024

On 19 June 2023, the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) concluded its work and adopted the BBNJ Agreement. Closing a negotiating process that spanned nearly two decades, delegates celebrated the historic achievement as a triumph for multilateralism, with many acknowledging the Agreement could not have come soon enough, as threats to the ocean and its biodiversity continue to increase.

The [Agreement](#) opened for signature on 20 September 2023 and will enter into force following the receipt of 60 instruments of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession.

To ensure the BBNJ Agreement is operational following its entry into force, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution [78/272](#) on 24 April 2024. This resolution established the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement under the UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement (PrepCom or Commission).

The organizational session of the PrepCom convened from 24-26 June 2024 at UN Headquarters in New York to elect its Co-Chairs and Bureau members, adopt its programme of work, and schedule its future meetings.

Opening Session

On Monday, 24 June, Vladimir Jares, Director, UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), opened the organizational session of the PrepCom.

Miguel de Serpa Soares, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and UN Legal Counsel, welcomed delegates, noting the urgency of taking action given the decline in ocean health. He noted there is slow but steady movement toward entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement, with 91 signatories and 7 ratifications to date. Yet, he added, there is still a long way to go until the agreement gets the necessary 60 instruments of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession to enter into force. Until the permanent Secretariat is established, he said, DOALOS is performing the Secretariat functions and conducting activities to allow a better understanding of the agreement and promote its entry into force.

De Serpa Soares said the Conference of the Parties (COP) will have to address a number of critical issues at its first meeting for

effective implementation of the Agreement, including institutional arrangements as well as financial resources and mechanisms.

Election of Officers

On Monday morning, Director Jares announced that the President of the UN General Assembly is continuing to consult on the nominations of the Preparatory Commission's Co-Chairs.

The Commission then elected its Bureau members by acclamation:

- Japan, Philippines, and Singapore from Asia-Pacific
- Latvia, Poland, and Romania from Eastern Europe
- Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, and Chile from Latin America and the Caribbean
- Australia, Belgium, and Germany from the Western European and Others Group (WEOG)

The ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP said they would like to rotate their seats since there were nine countries expressing interest. The AFRICAN GROUP said they were still consulting.

Jares said that since there were still no nominations for Co-Chairs, the Commission must decide whether to suspend proceedings or if a Bureau member could act as interim Chair. AUSTRALIA proposed, and the Commission agreed, to suspend the meeting to allow the Bureau members to discuss the best way forward. The meeting was suspended at 10:30 am.

The meeting resumed at 12:00 pm. Jares announced that the elected members of the Bureau agreed that Amb. Janine Coye-Felson (Belize) would serve as interim Co-Chair.

Cameroon, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, nominated Mauritius, Sierra Leone, and South Africa to serve on the Bureau. They were elected by acclamation.

On Monday afternoon, Jares read a letter from the President of the General Assembly nominating Janine Coye-Felson as Co-Chair, and said he would continue consultations on the second Co-Chair. Coye-Felson was elected by acclamation.

On Wednesday morning, ICELAND addressed the issue of the absence of the other Co-Chair. ICELAND, supported by CANADA, NORWAY, the EU, the US, the UK, and SWITZERLAND, paid tribute to Co-Chair Coye-Felson's role and leadership but expressed disappointment that the nomination of the Co-Chairs had not been carried out and concern this has impaired the PrepCom from using this meeting to its full potential. He asked why the reason for the delay had not been communicated. Co-Chair Coye-Felson said that DOALOS had been in contact with the President of the General Assembly's office so this issue could be resolved.

On Wednesday afternoon, Co-Chair Coye-Felson noted that the President of the General Assembly had completed consultations.

Director Jares read the letter dated 26 June 2024 nominating Adam McCarthy (Australia) as Co-Chair. He was elected by acclamation.

Austria, on behalf of WEOG, said now that Australia is Co-Chair, Canada was willing to fill the Bureau seat left vacant by Australia. Canada was elected by acclamation.

Co-Chair Coye-Felson noted that the Asia-Pacific Group had indicated it wants to rotate its Bureau seats as follows: Singapore, Japan and the Philippines until the first substantive session; Tonga, China and Indonesia from the first to the beginning of the second session, and Fiji, Republic of Korea, and Viet Nam beginning at the second substantive session. Further communication will follow on subsequent meetings. This was agreed. The full list of Bureau members is available [here](#).

Adoption of the Agenda

On Monday, Co-Chair Coye-Felson introduced the provisional agenda ([A/AC.296/2024/L.1](#)), which was adopted. She proposed that the Commission postpone consideration of Agenda Items 4 and 5 (Organization of work and Appointment of members of the Credentials Committee) and start with Agenda Item 6, General Statements.

Appointment of Members of the Credentials Committee

On Wednesday afternoon, Co-Chair Coye-Felson announced that, after consultations with the Bureau, consideration of this agenda item would be postponed until the first substantive meeting of the PrepCom. There were no objections.

General Statements

Delegations delivered statements on Monday. Many countries, including BRAZIL, CUBA, CHINA, the PHILIPPINES, ICELAND, INDONESIA, the EU, and NORWAY, updated delegates on the status of their internal processes to ratify the BBNJ Agreement. A number of developing countries stressed the importance of capacity building, marine technology transfer, and financing to guarantee that countries have the resources, experience, and capacity to implement the Agreement. Many called for the PrepCom to be a transparent and inclusive process.

Uganda, for the G-77/CHINA, reiterated the importance of attendance of delegates from all Member States at each Commission meeting. He stressed that any and all capacity-building activities related to the entry into force and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement must be responsive to the needs of developing countries.

The Dominican Republic, on behalf of the CORE LATIN AMERICAN GROUP (CLAM), noted asymmetries between delegations' size and resources and said, "We must guarantee the attendance of all our delegates." She implored delegates to contribute to the trust fund so that developing country experts from capitals can participate.

Samoa, on behalf of the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS), said inclusivity and cooperation are essential to set the foundation for the entry into force of the Agreement.

Saint Lucia, on behalf of the CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM), thanked those who had contributed to the trust fund and called for additional contributions. She said the BBNJ Agreement is a beacon of hope that after decades we finally have a credible chance to conserve the ocean. CUBA said the BBNJ Agreement is an essential step forward to protect oceans and seas.

The EU said it has completed its internal ratification process and most of its Member States are ready to ratify by the June 2025 UN Ocean Conference. The EU favored convening two sessions lasting a total of four weeks in 2025.

Vanuatu, on behalf of PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (PSIDS), called for the PrepCom to take the special circumstances of small island developing states (SIDS) into account, called for contributions to the trust fund, and asked everyone to uphold the agreement "we all worked hard on." The PHILIPPINES said their President has submitted the instrument of ratification to the Senate and called for the agreement to enter into force by the 2025 UN Ocean Conference.

THAILAND stressed that capacity building is essential for rapid ratification, adding the need to share best practices and expertise should be discussed by the PrepCom. CHILE called for strengthening collaboration and coordination of ocean governance bodies for successful implementation, and speeding up implementation through voluntary initiatives, including as a contribution to the target to protect at least 30% of global marine and coastal areas by 2030 (30x30 target). CHILE also reminded delegates that it has offered to host the Secretariat in Valparaíso.

JAPAN said proper development of underlining rules and systems is essential for implementation of the Agreement. MONACO was proud to be one of the first countries to ratify the Agreement and noted much work remains to be done so the first COP can be productive and effective.

NEPAL said full implementation of the Agreement needs capacity building, transfer of marine technologies, and innovative financing. He stressed the need to connect the health of oceans with the health of mountains and the wellbeing of all people. CHINA called the BBNJ Agreement a historical milestone that opens a new chapter in cooperation on marine biodiversity. He said that the Agreement fully respects the maritime interests of states and does not apply to disputed maritime areas, and all states should consider each other's concerns.

Saying the BBNJ Agreement represents a triumph of multilateralism to conserve biodiversity and the oceans, ARGENTINA called for better cooperation between states for effective implementation at the national level and to improve capacity of states to participate in the conservation of marine biodiversity. The US noted the BBNJ Agreement is a high priority for them, and they are working to join the Agreement. They committed to capacity building and noted the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is seeking proposals to help in this regard. JAMAICA echoed support on the importance of capacity building and technical assistance.

BRAZIL said the BBNJ Agreement marks the beginning of a new era and humankind must benefit from resources of the high seas and seabed. He called for building on convergences with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and other agreements and stressed the importance of a clear programme of work for 2024 and 2025. IRAN said the PrepCom should take into account the special interests and needs of developing countries, and the dates of meetings should be announced with enough time for preparation.

ICELAND stressed that the PrepCom's task is not to redraft the agreement but to translate it from the page into practice. AUSTRALIA said time is of the essence to reach agreement on meeting dates and the programme of work.

INDONESIA urged inclusivity and transparency, emphasizing the need to encourage attendance of all states, especially developing ones, in the work of the Commission. The SEYCHELLES said it was the fourth country to ratify the Agreement, which is illustrative of the value they attach to and the interest they have in ocean governance.

CANADA said success in achieving the objectives of the Agreement is reliant on its early entry into force and warned threats to marine biodiversity are mounting and our efforts are more important than ever. VIET NAM said the sessions should be held in person with necessary time and resources, and they are open to the possibility of intersessional work, but this should not replace official sessions of the Commission.

OMAN called for a dedicated mechanism for scientific and data exchange. TÜRKIYE called for setting up the benefit-sharing committee at the first meeting of the COP. The UK said the role of UNCLOS as the cornerstone of ocean governance has been strengthened by the BBNJ Agreement.

EGYPT said the Commission should be transparent, all countries should be listened to, and least developed countries should have full and effective participation. NORWAY called for an inclusive process. SINGAPORE reiterated its support and commitment to the process.

The ISA noted its unique experience and its new [report](#) on the contributions of the ISA to the BBNJ Agreement.

The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) supported the call for the Commission to meet early and often: once in 2024, twice in 2025, and as needed in 2026. She also called for early implementation of the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM).

The UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) cited its experience and how they can support Member States in areas beyond national jurisdiction, noting the many opportunities for synergies between the BBNJ Agreement and other multilateral environmental agreements.

The HIGH SEAS ALLIANCE called for the first meeting of the PrepCom to be in 2024, if possible, urged the Commission to work transparently and have webcasts of proceedings, and said intersessional work may be necessary. GREENPEACE noted there are only six years left to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030 and the BBNJ Agreement can help achieve this goal.

The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW (ICEL) said intersessional meetings can create a valuable space to enhance the implementation of the Agreement and the Commission should not only focus on actions the COP is mandated to take at its first meeting, but also other actions that will need to be taken at an early stage, such as the CHM.

The INTERNATIONAL CABLE PROTECTION COMMITTEE said that submarine telecom cables need to be integrated into the BBNJ regime.

Programme of Work

On Monday, Co-Chair Coye-Felson proposed first discussing the programme of work for the Commission and then the possible meeting dates. Discussions were based on the Secretariat's note on matters to be addressed at the first meeting of the COP ([A/AC.296/2024/3](#)).

Uganda for the G-77/CHINA, Colombia for CLAM, and Saint Lucia for CARICOM called for discussing the rules of procedure for the COP and its subsidiary organs; the functions, modalities and terms of reference for subsidiary bodies; decisions on the Secretariat; financial resources; modalities for the sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits from marine genetic resources and digital sequence information in areas beyond national jurisdiction; establishment of a finance committee; and arrangements with the GEF.

The EU said the Commission needs to discuss the rules of procedure, financial rules, cooperation with the GEF, participation

of observers, and establishment of the Secretariat. The UK said they need to work on the functioning of the Secretariat, noting the modalities for benefit-sharing are something for the COP, not the PrepCom.

On the dates, Colombia, for CLAM, said we need adequate time for each thematic point, and we should prevent any clashes with meetings of other UN bodies, especially UNCLOS. Uganda, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, said the meetings should not clash with major multilateral meetings with close connections to UNCLOS and environmental law. He called for two two-week sessions in 2025, after which the PrepCom should look at progress made and set the agenda for 2026.

The EU supported two two-week meetings in 2025, with one early in the year and the other in September. Saint Lucia, for CARICOM, also supported two two-week sessions in 2025 and possibly two in 2026, if necessary.

CHILE called for an additional session in 2024 and expressed hope that the Agreement will enter into force in 2025 with the first COP in 2026.

Director Jares noted that it would be difficult to have another meeting in 2024 because of the lack of budgetary provisions, saying there is no way to request funding before the next session of the General Assembly. Furthermore, he added, no meetings can be held during the UNGA. The other challenge, he said, is that time is needed to prepare the documentation and ensure it is translated. He announced some possible dates for both one-week and two-week meetings in 2025.

On Tuesday morning, delegations continued to comment on the programme of work and schedule for the PrepCom.

Many delegations, including the G-77/CHINA, the UK, CLAM, the EU, CARICOM, FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA (FSM), US, MONACO, CHINA, and ICELAND, called for clustering the agenda items thematically. FSM, supported by CANADA, added that the PrepCom should prioritize those items that the first meeting of the COP has to address. The UK and the HIGH SEAS ALLIANCE said that they should also prioritize the CHM. Saint Lucia, for CARICOM, said they trust the Co-Chairs to cluster the topics in a way that will ensure efficiency, inclusivity, transparency and accessibility.

The UK, supported by the EU, CANADA and BRAZIL, said it would be worth studying experiences of other treaties and determining best practices, noting there is no need to reinvent the wheel.

There was also emerging consensus on the need for Commission meetings to be in person, with some virtual or livestream, if possible. CLAM, the G-77/CHINA, CARICOM, and the MALDIVES called for the PrepCom to avoid parallel meetings as much as possible, to facilitate participation for small delegations.

Director Jares presented the possible dates for the PrepCom's meetings, noting what other meetings would be taking place at the same time at UN Headquarters. Most delegations expressed flexibility and agreed they need a minimum of two two-week meetings with intersessional work to move the process forward.

The EU and SWITZERLAND expressed a preference to meet in April and September 2025. However, some delegations noted the challenge of meeting in early September as they have to prepare for the UNGA high-level week. SINGAPORE noted the proposed June-July dates should not conflict with the ISA meeting, if the ISA maintains its current schedule. The Secretariat reiterated that it will be difficult to prepare documents in all languages for a meeting in January 2025 due to budgetary and time constraints.

Many delegates, including the UK, SWITZERLAND, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, MONACO, and the EU, said documents need to be translated into all UN languages to ensure inclusivity. The EU and the G-77/CHINA, among others, called for the documentation to be available well in advance of the meetings.

The HIGH SEAS ALLIANCE suggested the PrepCom should also schedule at least one or two meetings in 2026, noting if the Agreement receives 60 ratifications by the June 2025 UN Ocean Conference, it will enter into force in October 2025 and the first COP will need to be held before October 2026.

On intersessional work, CLAM and the US noted that virtual or in-person intersessional meetings would also be useful, especially if they can help move the discussions forward between PrepCom meetings. The G-77/CHINA, supported by the UK, CARICOM, MONACO, CHINA, and CANADA, said intersessional work must be accessible, predictable, inclusive, and transparent. The G-77/CHINA and CARICOM preferred in-person meetings, but were open to hybrid or video participation, subject to budgetary implications. MONACO said that any intersessional meetings should be announced well in advance to facilitate participation.

The G-77/CHINA, the UK, and CARICOM supported the utilization of facilitators or coordinators for intersessional work, taking into account gender and geographical balance.

The UK, supported by CANADA, said expert input may be needed on the preparation of some of the documents, particularly on the CHM and the provisions on marine genetic resources. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted experts have an important role to play, but their participation must not prejudice the intergovernmental nature of the process.

The UK, supported by ICEL and the HIGH SEAS ALLIANCE, said the operationalization of the CHM will take time and expertise and the PrepCom should consider it. The HIGH SEAS ALLIANCE also called for a pilot phase for the CHM.

CARICOM, supported by ICEL, said the PrepCom should learn what worked and what did not work during the Intergovernmental Conference process with regard to intersessional activities.

CARICOM supported the participation of civil society organizations. ICELAND warned the PrepCom not to prejudice the role of the COP. CHILE said all decisions for the COP should be adopted at the last meeting of the PrepCom, possibly in 2026.

Co-Chair Coye-Felson suspended the meeting at 12:08 pm so the Bureau could meet and reflect on what was said and discuss the way forward.

After lunch, Co-Chair Coye-Felson asked delegates to share any additional perspectives on intersessional meetings. She said the Bureau thought they could be used as a capacity-building exercise in preparation for meetings of the PrepCom. Experts could also bring their knowledge to bear on technical issues, she added. She also asked delegates if there was a need for an intersessional or pre-session meeting before the end of 2024, and what format intersessionals should take.

Colombia, on behalf of CLAM, said they do not want to lose momentum if the next meeting of the PrepCom is not until April 2025. She thought having an intersessional meeting during the first week of December 2024 might be useful to deal with the “simplest issues” like the rules of procedure.

Uganda, for the G-77/CHINA, supported by FSM, noted virtual meetings will be challenging and stressed the need for adequate contributions to the trust fund to enable everyone to participate. FSM added that intersessionals could be more like assigning homework rather than scheduling a meeting.

Co-Chair Coye-Felson said the Bureau would consult on the entire work programme and circulate a proposal on Wednesday.

Clusters: On Wednesday morning, Co-Chair Coye-Felson said the Bureau discussed the organization of clusters and the programme of work. She presented the draft list of clusters, noting it contained matters to be addressed by the COP at its first meeting, as set out in the BBNJ Agreement, as well as additional matters identified during this meeting of the PrepCom that need to be addressed by the COP at an early stage. Delegates asked for time to consider the document. The meeting was suspended for 30 minutes.

The document contained 14 items in four clusters: Governance issues, Issues pertaining to institutional arrangements, Financial issues, and Other issues of relevance for consideration by the first meeting of the COP.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and CHINA said the document should have been provided to delegates earlier, and noted that items 12 and 13 in Section IV (Preparation for reviewing the first proposal to establish area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, in areas beyond national jurisdiction; and Guidelines for the establishment, implementation and enforcement of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, in areas beyond national jurisdiction) are not suitable for the PrepCom but are issues for the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

Uganda, for the G-77/CHINA, supported by the EU, Vanuatu for PSIDS, FSM, ICELAND, AUSTRALIA, the US, MONACO, NORWAY, and JAPAN, called for prioritizing the items that need to be done for COP 1. FSM, supported by SINGAPORE, suggested adding language in the chapeau about prioritization.

The UK asked for an explanation on item 11 (Modalities for the sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits from the utilization of marine genetic resources and digital sequence information on marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction). CANADA, supported by the EU, NORWAY, and the UK, questioned the presence of items 11-13, saying they should be the mandate of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

With regard to item 11, BRAZIL responded that they do not think the PrepCom should be limited and there is a mandate for the COP to advance Article 14 of the Agreement (Fair and equitable sharing of benefits). He added that they were not expecting a draft decision out of the PrepCom, but this did not preclude them from advancing work on this if time allowed.

The PHILIPPINES preferred retention of item 13, noting this is important element of the BBNJ agreement and should be considered by the PrepCom. Saint Lucia, on behalf of CARICOM, said the clusters are a good basis for the programme of work and expressed trust in the Co-Chairs to strike a balance between meetings. Colombia, on behalf of CLAM, welcomed the cluster on other issues and suggested there are many areas where progress could be made in intersessional work.

CANADA, supported by AUSTRALIA, the US, NEW ZEALAND, MONACO, and the UK, suggested moving item 6 on arrangements for the functioning of the Secretariat, including deciding on its seat, to the cluster on Governance issues.

CANADA, supported by ICELAND, AUSTRALIA, the US, NEW ZEALAND, MONACO, and the UK, suggested the CHM should have its own cluster.

CANADA, supported by the US and NEW ZEALAND, suggested that item 14 (Modalities and mechanisms to enhance cooperation with relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies) belongs under governance issues. IRAN did not think this should be a priority.

Under item 3 (Selection of the members of the subsidiary bodies established under the Agreement), the G-77/CHINA, supported by the EU, PSIDS, and JAPAN, suggested adding “selection procedures” since the PrepCom will not be selecting the members of subsidiary bodies. They also proposed adding flexibility to address other matters if time permits.

The G-77/CHINA, FSM, ICELAND, the US, SINGAPORE, NORWAY, and the UK agreed there should be no general statements at the first substantive meeting of the PrepCom.

ICEL suggested that there should be cooperation among the subsidiary bodies and the COP could mandate the Scientific and Technical Body to create a roster of experts so parties with capacity constraints could consult with experts to enable compliance with environmental impact assessment (EIA) requirements.

IUCN said a third PrepCom meeting is essential and recommended acknowledging the need for intersessional work by targeted working groups that could gather information and draft texts, but have no decision-making power. IUCN also highlighted the need to establish modalities for cooperation with other bodies during the PrepCom process itself.

Uganda, for the G-77/CHINA, proposed new language in item 10 to include operationalization of other provisions on funding, such as initial resource mobilization, among others.

Co-Chair Coye-Felson summarized areas of emerging agreement, saying she would meet with the Bureau over lunch and prepare a revised list of clusters.

On Wednesday afternoon, a revised list of clusters was circulated. Co-Chair Coye-Felson reviewed the changes to the document. She noted that the section on other issues was deleted and an expanded chapeau states, “The Co-Chairs will ensure that matters to be addressed by the Conference of the Parties at its first meeting as expressly set out in the Agreement are given priority in the work of the Commission. The Commission may exchange views and information on any other issues of relevance for the effective implementation of the Agreement.” The revised document also contains asterisks on each item that has to be done by COP 1, as per the BBNJ Agreement.

The EU noted that item 4 should clarify that the COP, not the PrepCom, will decide on the seat of the Secretariat, even though the discussion will be held in the PrepCom. The US suggested deleting “deciding on” and just saying “Arrangement for the functioning of the Secretariat, including its seat.” The EU added that there are ongoing discussions on item 11(a) on initial resource mobilization.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION did not support discussing modalities for reporting by parties for implementation of the agreement in the PrepCom. The Co-Chair responded that there is no asterisk on this item so it is not required, but should be considered at some stage by the COP.

After a break for informal consultations, Uganda, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, presented some edits to the chapeau and item 7 (on enhancing cooperation with relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies), and proposed merging items on modalities for reporting by Parties on the implementation of the Agreement and modalities for reporting by the Secretariat to the Conference of the Parties into one item called “Reporting obligations.” He said they were still consulting on resource mobilization.

After another break for consultations, delegates still could not reach agreement on item 11(a) on resource mobilization. Co-Chair Coye-Felson noted that there was convergence on the other issues and the meeting needed to come to a close. She said she would reflect that there had been discussions on the clusters, and

some issues require further discussion. She said that if everyone agreed, the Co-Chairs would consult with the Bureau to develop a provisional programme of work on the issues where there was agreement. Furthermore, the Bureau would discuss 11(a) on resource mobilization and make a new proposal. This was agreed.

The final list of three clusters address Governance Issues, Issues pertaining to the operation of the CHM, and Financial rules, and financial resources and mechanism. The Co-Chairs will ensure matters to be addressed by the COP at its first meeting as expressly set out in the Agreement are given priority in the work of the Commission. The Commission may exchange views and information on any other issues of relevance for the effective implementation of the Agreement.

Governance issues include:

- Rules of procedure for the COP (*);
- Terms of reference, modalities for the operation, and rules of procedure for the subsidiary bodies established under the Agreement;
- Selection process of the members of the Scientific and Technical Body (*) and the other subsidiary bodies established under the Agreement ;
- Arrangements for the functioning of the Secretariat, including its seat (*);
- Reporting obligations; and
- Modalities and mechanisms to enhance cooperation with relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies.

Issues pertaining to the operation of the **Clearing-House**

Mechanism address:

- Type, architecture and functionalities of the platform;
- Process for generating the “BBNJ” standardized batch identifier;
- Modalities to facilitate the matching of capacity-building needs with the support available and with providers for the transfer of marine technology, and to facilitate access to related know-how and expertise; and
- Terms of cooperation with relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies.

Issues related to the **Financial rules, and financial resources and mechanism** address:

- Financial rules governing the funding of the COP and the funding of the Secretariat and any subsidiary bodies (*);
- Arrangements with the GEF to give effect to the relevant provisions on funding (*); and
- Operationalization of other provisions on financial resources and mechanism, including resource mobilization, which is still pending agreement.

Dates and Other Organizational Matters: On Wednesday afternoon, Co-Chair Coye-Felson said that after consultation with the Bureau, she proposes that the Commission will meet for two sessions of two weeks each: 14-25 April 2025 and 18-29 August 2025, pending approval by the General Assembly. There will be one session in 2026 that will be determined by the Secretary-General in consultation with the Co-Chairs. Additional meetings will be determined at a later stage. There were no objections.

On other organizational matters, Co-Chair Coye-Felson reported that the Bureau agreed that substantive meetings of the Commission will ensure transparency, inclusivity, and meaningful participation, full conference services including interpretation, and documents in all UN languages. There will also be meeting coverage, a webcast, and no more than two parallel meetings at any given time.

Co-Chair Coye-Felson said the Co-Chairs will discuss possible intersessional work in consultation with the Bureau. The Co-Chairs will also identify required documentation for the first two meetings in consultation with the Bureau and the Secretariat. There were no objections.

Other Matters

On Tuesday afternoon, Co-Chair Coye-Felson asked DOALOS Director Jares to report on the status of the trust fund for the participation of developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs), land-locked developing countries (LLDCs) and SIDS.

Jares reported the trust fund facilitated the attendance of 19 delegates at this meeting, including 14 from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. He thanked the UK for its contribution to the trust fund, but added that all remaining funds have been used and the trust fund is now depleted. DOALOS received 25 applications for funding, of which 19 were received in time. He noted that DOALOS cannot support delegates if they do not have valid visas. He called for additional contributions to the trust fund, noting that even small contributions made regularly could sustain the fund. Financial contributions can be made by Member States, international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and others, he added.

Uganda, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, called for more assistance to developing countries.

On Wednesday, IRELAND announced that they will provide funding to the World Maritime University for capacity building for developing countries to ratify and implement the agreement. He said further details on this partnership programme will be released soon.

Closure of the Session

Co-Chair Coye-Felson said she will issue a statement that captures the PrepCom's decisions, which will be issued as an official document. She thanked everyone for being helpful and constructive in terms of how we might be able to accelerate our agenda. She said she was happy we will have a Co-Chair next time, adding we will make sure the issues of highest importance will be addressed by the PrepCom.

She gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:07 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

UN General Assembly (UNGA) Preparatory Meeting for the Third UN Ocean Conference: This one-day preparatory meeting will consider themes for the Ocean Conference's ten Ocean Action panels and elements for a brief, concise, action-oriented, and inter-governmentally agreed declaration. **date:** 2 July 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025

36th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI): The 36th session of COFI will address ways to achieve a blue transformation of aquatic food systems. **dates:** 8-12 July 2024 **location:** FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy **www:** fao.org/cofi/en

ISA Council and Assembly: The ISA Assembly will convene to, among other things, elect a new Secretary-General, from 29 July to 2 August 2024. From 15-26 July, the second part of the 29th session of the ISA Council will convene to continue discussions on the draft exploitation regulations. It will be preceded by the Legal and Technical Commission meeting, which will take place from 1-12 July, and the Finance Committee meeting from 10-12 July. **dates:** 15 July – 2 August 2024 **location:** Kingston, Jamaica **www:** isa.org.jm/sessions/29th-session-2024

UNGA High-level Meeting to Address Existential Threats Posed by Sea-Level Rise: The UN General Assembly will convene a one-day high-level meeting on addressing the threats posed by sea-level rise. **date:** 25 September 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** press.un.org/en/2024/ga11258.doc.htm

UN Biodiversity Conference 2024 (CBD COP 16): COP 16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 11th COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (COP/MOP) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the Fifth COP/MOP of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing will convene for the first time since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. **dates:** 21 October - 1 November 2024 **location:** Cali, Colombia **www:** cbd.int/conferences/2024

Plastic Pollution INC-5: The fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, will attempt to complete negotiations on the instrument. **dates:** 25 November - 1 December 2024 **location:** Busan, Republic of Korea **www:** www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-5

First Substantive Meeting of the BBNJ PrepCom: The first substantive meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement under the UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement will begin work on the cluster of issues agreed by the organizational session. **dates:** 14-25 April 2025 (TBC) **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/bbnjagreement/en

Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3): Co-Chaired by France and Costa Rica, the Conference aims to generate transformative action and provide solutions the Ocean needs, supported by ocean science and funding for SDG 14 (life below water). **dates:** 9-13 June 2025 **location:** Nice, France **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025

For additional upcoming events, see: sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

BBNJ	Marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
CLAM	Core Latin American Group
COP	Conference of the Parties
DOALOS	UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICEL	International Council of Environmental Law
ISA	International Seabed Authority
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
PrepCom	Preparatory Commission
PSIDS	Pacific Small Island Developing States
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNGA	UN General Assembly
WEOG	Western European and Others Group