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PRINCIPAUTÉ DE MONACOCOSTA RICA
GOBIERNO DEL BICENTENARIO
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Guiding Questions

Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs), with a focus on Pre and Post Cruise Notification

30 June 2021

The High Seas Treaty Dialogue on 30 June will build on past dialogues and focus on Marine Genetic Resources, with a specific focus on Pre and Post Cruise Notification.

The dialogue will have two parts: A panel presentation and Q &A with Marine Science Expert Alex Rogers on Pre and Post Cruise Notification and the BBNJ agreement, followed by a discussion with a set Guiding Questions.

Excerpt from: Marine Genetic Resources in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction: Promoting Marine Scientific Research and Enabling Equitable Benefit Sharing

By Rogers, Escobar-Briones, Gjerde, Gobin, Jaspars, Levin, Linse, Rabone, Ramirez-Llodra, Lopez, Shank, Sink, Snelgrove, Taylor, Wagner, Harden-Davies, Currie.

“In order for developing states to place personnel on board research vessels to Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) for non-monetary benefits such as training, capacity building, or the opportunity to collect samples to assess the presence of Marine Genetic Resources (MGR), prior cruise notification is required. Such notification guarantees transparency in Marine Scientific Research (MSR) in ABNJ and confidence for developing states that they are able to identify opportunities for access and benefit sharing. This notification might also assist in the tracing of MGR from sample collection to commercial production, a process required for sharing of monetary benefits. Access to records of past cruises (e.g. cruise reports) would also expedite access to potential MGR, because these reports typically contain details of biological material collected and where the material has gone for investigation.

Prior cruise notification has been an area of contention because of concerns that whatever mechanism is put into place could delay or even hamper marine scientific research (MSR). Some states have also raised security issues with respect to advanced cruise notification. Given these discussions, there is a need to streamline the currently fragmented and complex practices in cruise notification, combine existing vessel databases and provide accessible information on research vessels (Brogiato et al., 2018; Rabone et al., 2019). Such a rationalisation of scientific cruise notification at a global scale would not only help enable access for scientists from developing countries but would also assist in marine scientific research in general. This is because it would enhance opportunities for collaboration amongst scientists from all states and might also reduce unnecessary replication of scientific sampling. Given the massive costs of global and ocean-class research vessels, this may lead to more effective usage of resources through better use of existing cruises or might save costs by preventing cruise overlap (Collins et al., in review, Oldham et al., 2014).”



Guiding Questions which could be considered for the dialogue are set out below:

- Q1.** How can the “benefits” from the sharing of scientific research and knowledge derived from MGRs be distinguished from the duty to promote scientific research (eg. article 242) and its publication and dissemination (eg. Article 244) of Part XIII of UNCLOS?

- Q2.** What are the objectives and function of pre-cruise and post-cruise notification in relation to the Agreement? Should the requirements for pre and post-cruise notification be detailed within the Agreement or developed afterwards by scientific expert body under the Agreement? How will the notifications be monitored?