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வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள் அமைச்சு
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ජනරජ භෞවිතූම්ලේ, කොළඹ 1, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව, குடியரசு கட்டிடம், கொழும்பு 1, Republic Building, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Media Release

Sri Lanka Welcomes Historic UN Agreement to Protect High Seas - Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

As an island state committed to the sustainable use of the ocean, its governance and the preservation of its biodiversity as the common heritage of mankind, Sri Lanka welcomes the conclusion of negotiations on a landmark agreement to enhance the international legal regime concerning the conservation of marine biological diversity in the High Seas. The agreement concluded on 4 March at the UN Headquarters in New York covers almost two-thirds of the ocean that lies in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and provides a framework for establishing marine protected areas (MPAs), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and share the marine genetic resources of the high seas.

Sri Lanka welcomes the commitment by developed countries under the BBNJ agreement to fund capacity-building projects which will assist developing countries to undertake conservation measures. In order to benefit from the agreement in a fair and equitable manner, developing countries such as Sri Lanka need capacity building and transfer of technology, knowledge sharing and cooperation to fulfill rights and responsibilities in a meaningful manner. Sri Lanka's participation during the negotiations ensured the conference takes into account these outcomes.

Given the interaction between marine life in the high seas and marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction and economies, the implementation of the BBNJ will also contribute to sustainable use of marine biodiversity areas beyond Sri Lanka's national jurisdiction while also mitigating adverse impacts on the ocean through sea level rise, ocean pollution, and over exploitation of and marine resources.

Sri Lanka has demonstrated its commitment to ocean governance by fostering regional dialogue on pertinent issues within the region. Sri Lanka is the Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security till 2027, IORA Vice Chair for 2021-2023 and will take over as the IORA Chair this year. Sri Lanka has already committed to declare a minimum 30% of its marine reserves as protected areas at the UNFCCC COP26 in 2021.

The BBNJ is another landmark under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a process in which Sri Lanka has played an active role. Formal adoption, ratification and implementation of BBNJ agreement will protect the ocean for the benefit of present and future generations as part of the global commons.

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