

Speaker: Mrs Marzia Rovere

Item 14 – Report of the Chair of the Legal and Technical Commission

Guidance to facilitate the development of regional environmental management plans

Thank you Mr. President,

Since this is the first time Italy takes the floor, we wish to congratulate you with your continued work and apologize for not attending in person the first three days of the third part of the session due to a conflicting schedule of our delegation. Italy would also like to thank Secretary General and our host country Jamaica for working so hard to ensure the availability of the conference centre for this part of the session.

Italy wishes to commend again the Chair and all members of the LTC for their hard work, a lot of which was conducted intersessionally.

Regarding the Standardized procedure for the development, approval and review of regional environmental management plans, Italy reaffirms the need and urgency for developing such a procedure and therefore welcomes this long awaited draft document.

However, by reading the document, we have a few requests for further consideration by the LTC.

Italy would like in fact to restate, as previous interventions have recalled, that in 2020, Germany and Netherlands, co-sponsored by Costa Rica submitted a proposal for a REMP development protocol based on extensive consultation and expertise, including a 75-person workshop held in Hamburg in 2019.

Italy supported this proposal and in general the proactive and competent contribution from Member States to the works of the Authority, which was based also on the inclusion of external and scientific expertise.

From the report of the LTC it appears that this document was not taken into full consideration and little explanation is provided on the reasons why the valuable suggestions provided by that proposal were disregarded.

In particular, we would like to point out to the Role of the Expert Committee that was proposed by Germany, Netherlands and Costa Rica in their proposal. The proposal suggests that an expert committee be contracted for leading initial workshops and developing the first draft REMP.

Italy wonders why this approach has not been incorporated in the proposal put forward by the LTC.

Italy wishes to remind that while REMPs prepared for the CCZ and Mid-Atlantic Ridge could benefit from the existence of scientific initiatives dedicated to those regions, for other areas, including the priority areas of the Indian Ocean and the NW Pacific Ocean, previous scientific knowledge remain very narrow and sparse.

In this respect, it would be extremely relevant to start gathering experts from the very first phases of development of the REMP. Therefore, we believe in the value of creating and engaging a pool of experts since the beginning of the development of a REMP, including the phase of compilation and synthesis of available environmental data and information. We believe that this phase requires the active engagement of: indigenous and traditional knowledge, representatives of local communities, data owners and collectors, industry players in the region, representatives of relevant coastal States, other marine users in the region, including relevant international and regional bodies, such as fishery regional commissions, submarine cable organizations, a future scientific committee convened by the BBNJ Instrument, and committees convened by the Convention of the Biological Diversity for the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA).

We think the expert committee suggested by Germany, Netherland and Costa Rica should be given further consideration in the LTC proposal and that a clear process for the selection of an expert committee be included in the guidance to facilitate the development of REMP.

This need for having experts in the area of concern speaks also directly to the Criteria for Selecting Attendees to the Workshops that the LTC recommendation envisions will be convened for the scientific and policy assessments that will feed into the first draft REMP. All relevant experts in a specific area should be invited to the workshops in a more inclusive and consultative manner.

Finally, regarding the stakeholder consultation period, Italy believes that should be longer than 45 days. We recommend providing a minimum of 90 days as stated in the Germany, Netherlands and Costa Rica proposal.

We also reinforce the need for an annual Report, as proposed by Germany, Netherlands and Costa Rica, that summarizes new environmental data from all contractors, as well as new scientific literature data that are relevant to the REMP, and that should also include recommendations for a review of the REMP before the five years period, if so required.

Thank you Mr President