

**Intervention by Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session on Wednesday 20 July following the Secretary General's Report.**

Honorable Secretary General, Distinguished Delegates and Fellow Observers,

It is a privilege to be able to take part in this session as the first art institution to be granted an Observer Status in this UN affiliated body. On this note, thank you for your leadership Ambassador Helmut Türk in the previous session, which helped spark TBA21's interest in the ISA.

The fact that Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, as a foundation initiated by Francesca von Habsburg, saw a clear motivation to act and take part in the meetings of the International Seabed Authority is a sign of the significance of the impact this body will have in the future, especially in the conservation of the marine heritage of mankind.

Few issues in the world's history have caused comparable mystery, fascination and inspiration as the deep sea. Through Moby Dick, Poseidon, the deep sea became tangible and a source of inspiration for millennia. In its depiction, the deep sea created the imaginative heritage for mankind we now know in the arts.

Thyssen Bornemisza Art Contemporary, or TBA21, has become an active communicator of issues of global public interest to preserve our marine environment and to address climate change and thereby make it accessible to a broader audience. By launching our newest program, The Current, at COP21 in Paris in 2015, we signaled our commitment to the SDGs, specifically SDG 14.

This program reexamines the culture of exploration and discovery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By bridging the divide between the natural sciences and contemporary art to communicate the complexity of today's pressing and often abstract issues in regard to climate change we have set out on a unique endeavor. By launching three different expeditions to Papua New Guinea and French Polynesia we have been making an effort to grasp and communicate the impacts we, as humans, have made, and also the efforts we can make to preserve our oceans and imagine unconventional, yet unexplored best-practices to move into the future. It is no surprise that the first bioluminescent turtle was documented on one of TBA21's cruises in collaboration with National Geographic's David Gruber.

Shortly thereafter, TBA21 set out to use the capacity of art, not only as a form of communication but also as an agent of conservation. By creating an intricate program, designed around the mythical Cocos Island involving renowned contemporary artists, such as Marina Abramovic, Doug Aitken and Olafur Eliasson we were able to raise considerable funds, awareness, and identification in the pursuit of marine conservation at an auction in New York.

Only in March 2016, TBA21 endowed and launched the Alligator Head Foundation to actively preserve agents of ecological balance around the Jamaican coastline and spreads awareness on conservation in Jamaica.

Most recently, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Nanyang Technical University located in Singapore to promote the interaction between science and the arts in order to convey the importance of alternative knowledge production for conservation and tackling climate change from multifarious perspectives.

As you see, in less than nine months since the innovatory inception of our most recent program, we have been making relentless efforts to promote SDG 14, marine conservation and the common heritage of mankind. By initiating our program at COP21, creating scientific and artistic partnerships with diverse institutions, launching expeditions into the unknown, and initiating community driven engagement we have made a strong case for ecological perspectives through the arts and allows for the possibility to address various issues pertinent to the oceans.

In order to ensure an inclusive and modern institution regulating the international seabed, the Article 154 Review comes at a timely moment, by having a draft exploitation to work with. The practical exclusion of environmental protection in the exploitation code, lacking geographical representation, responses in the survey process of the 154 review, the conclusion drawn from few observations and the criticism directed at selected organs of the ISA all serve as urgent wake up calls for our common good. In order to create a sustainable and inclusive institution, led with improved governance to address the issues that our common heritage of mankind will face, we will have the possibility to increase accountability by creating a transparent decision making process, from draft to finish. Let's use it!

Lastly, Thank you very much for your attendance at our side event yesterday. Thank you for your attention and we look forward to further engagements as Observers at the International Seabed Authority.