

**Statement of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, at the Third Meeting of the United Nations Open-minded Informal Consultative Process, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/33 in order to facilitate the Annual Review by the Assembly on Developments in Ocean Affairs**

**New York, 8 April 2002**

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Messrs. Co-Chairmen:

The Group of 77 and China gives the utmost importance to the work that has been taking place within the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process, this is why we welcome this Third Meeting of the Process.

These meetings have a particular meaning this year, as the United Nations celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the opening for the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We would like to take this the opportunity to highlight the importance, for those States Parties to the Convention, to consider this international instrument as the legal framework applicable to all the activities realized in the oceans and the seas. In this context, it is also important for those countries to maintain the integrity of the Convention. These two aspects have been contemplated in the resolutions 54/33, 55/7 and 56/12 of the General Assembly.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen:

We wish to express our gratefulness, as well as to the Secretariat, for the execution and presentation of the advanced and unedited material on oceans and the law of the sea, which will be as a draft version of the Report of the Secretary General for this Third Meeting. We recognize all the efforts of the Secretariat in order to comply with its numerous commitments with the processing of documents and the compliance of the stipulated datelines to deliver reports. We are equally conscious that the date for this meeting was moved forward this year. Even so, we regret it hasn't been possible to count with the official report of the United Nations this year. We are confident, however, that there will be a more adequate programming in the future.

This year the holding of this meeting has also a special relevance since during the 57th regular session of the General Assembly the study on the efficiency and the usefulness of this Process will be examined, in accordance to the provisions of resolution 54/33 of the General Assembly. On this subject, the Group of 77 and China considers that the strengthening and improvement of the Process will be possible if its results are preserved, as per the above mentioned resolution, in other words to facilitate the yearly study, by the General Assembly, of the events related to oceanic matters, through the analysis of the report of the Secretary General about the oceans and the law of the sea and the formulation of suggestions to said organ to evaluate concrete questions, in particular, the identification of areas to be developed and to improve the cooperation and coordination in the intergovernmental and inter institutional levels.

Likewise, we share the opinion that the compliance towards this end requires the adoption of a total scope that will allow dealing with all of those items that will be of interest for the discussion of the referred events of the oceans and seas.

With regards to the agenda, the Group expresses its agreement with the items that will be discussed this year, namely: the protection and preservation of the marine seabed, and capacity-building, regional cooperation and coordination and integrated ocean management.

In what refers to said items, we would like to call the attention on the necessity that all those aspects of

marine science and its technology be duly studied with special attention to the needs of the developing countries regarding the sustainable development of these areas. In this context, we greatly expect results with regards to the discussions in Panel B, where this aspect is being considered.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen:

Related to the improvement of the capacity building, this is an aspect to which the Group of 77 and China gives special significance due to its implications in the adequate and advantageous handling of technology and marine science that the developing countries could make to achieve themselves the sustainable profit of the oceans and seas. In addition, an adequate marine resources management can maximize benefits to resource owners, community and national goals.

For developing countries, the lack of diverse types of resources for the access to technology and marine information is a matter of great concern. We believe it is of capital significance to have international and regional cooperation in this regard. This cooperation is also necessary to promote scientific marine research among developing countries, as well as to offer them all the information resulting from this research and the applications of technology.

Likewise, it's important to create a mechanism to ensure that national and regional institutions engaged in marine scientific research, in those areas under State's jurisdiction. Information, reports, data, conclusions and assessments should be available in a comprehensible and compatible format to that coastal State.

International and regional cooperation, as well as capacity building, are also significant to strengthen infrastructural and economic bases for export trade in fisheries products.

Related to the specific area of coordination, the G-77 and China considers that international, intergovernmental and interagency coordination on ocean issues is now more critical with the demise of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas (SOCA). Perhaps a more workable and practical way to continue the coordination functions of SOCA lies in strengthening the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS).

This raises the important question of the future of the Process. In this regard, we consider that it has certainly made a marked impact in deepening and broadening the General Assembly discussions and treatment of Ocean and Sea matters.

Regarding the protection and preservation of the marine seabed, we notice with satisfaction that some aspects relating to marine pollution and the handling of rights of the marine seabed have been considered in the advanced material.

To have a comprehensive approach of that issue, it is important to take into account, inter alia, the following aspects in the discussions of Panel A:

- Pollution in oceans and seas and their impacts on fresh water resources
- Impacts of pollution in fragile ecosystems
- Ballast water and its impacts on marine environment
- Dumping of wastes
- Hazardous wastes
- Radioactive and chemical wastes
- Marine pollution in coastal areas and its effects on agriculture and fresh water
- Crisis management in emergency situations

At the same time, we welcome the reference to marine security, particularly as it states the necessity to adopt

measures to prevent terrorism acts that would threaten the security of passengers, crews and ships.

Messrs. Co-Chairmen:

The Group would want also to reiterate its position on the necessity to avoid any duplication of tasks with other entities or exercises. For this reason, it is necessary once more to maintain this Process within the scope initially defined for it.

Finally, allow me to underline that these considerations have been formulated with a constructive intention, wishing to provide inputs that will enrich our work, we also share the wish of all delegations for the success of these meetings.

Thank you Messrs. Co-Chairmen.