

COP 8 Decision VIII/21

Curitiba, 20 - 31 March 2006

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Marine and coastal biological diversity: conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed genetic resources beyond the limits of national jurisdiction

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Notes* that deep seabed ecosystems beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, including hydrothermal vent, cold seep, seamount, coldwater coral and sponge reef ecosystems, contain genetic resources of great interest for their biodiversity value and for scientific research as well as for present and future sustainable development and commercial applications;
2. *Recognizes* that given the vulnerability and general lack of scientific knowledge of deep seabed biodiversity, there is an urgent need to enhance scientific research and cooperation and to provide for the conservation and sustainable use of these genetic resources in the context of the precautionary approach;
3. *Concerned* about the threats to genetic resources in the deep seabed beyond national jurisdiction, *requests* Parties and *urges* other States, having identified activities and processes under their jurisdiction and control which may have significant adverse impacts on deep seabed ecosystems and species in these areas, as requested in paragraph 56 of decision VII/5, to take measures to urgently manage such practices in vulnerable deep seabed ecosystems with a view to the conservation and sustainable use of resources, and report on measures taken as part of the national reporting process;
4. *Also invites* Parties, other Governments, research institutions and other relevant organizations to make available information on research activities related to deep seabed genetic resources beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and ensure that the results of such marine scientific research and analysis, when available, are effectively disseminated through international channels, as appropriate, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and *requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with relevant organizations, to compile and further disseminate such information through the clearing-house mechanism;
5. *Expresses its awareness* of a preliminary range of options which Parties and other States, individually or in cooperation, may utilize for the protection of deep seabed genetic resources beyond national jurisdiction, which may include: (i) the use of codes of conduct, guidelines and principles; and (ii) reduction and management of threats including through: permits and environmental impact assessments; establishment of marine protected areas; prohibition of detrimental and destructive practices in vulnerable areas; and *emphasizes the need* for further work in developing all of these options and other options, in particular within the framework of the United Nations;
6. *Recognizes also* that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea regulates activities in the

marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, and *urges* Parties and other States to cooperate within the relevant international and/or regional organizations in order to promote the conservation, management and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including deep seabed genetic resources;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, and other relevant international organizations, to further analyse and explore options for preventing and mitigating the impacts of some activities to selected seabed habitats and report the findings to future meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;

8. *Notes* the existence of the scientific information generated through other programmes of work including that on protected areas;

9. *Emphasizes* the urgent need, especially in developing countries, to build capacities relating to deep seabed biodiversity, including taxonomic capacity; to promote scientific and technical cooperation and technology transfer; and to exchange information regarding activities undertaken within the deep seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.