



Assembly

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Request for observer status in the Assembly

Note by the Secretariat

1. On 20 April 2009, the Director of Global and Regional Policy of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF International) submitted a letter to the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority requesting the status of observer in the Assembly of the Authority. The text of the letter with the additional information provided by the applicant is contained in the annex to the present note.
2. In accordance with rule 82, paragraph 1 (e), of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, “(n)on-governmental organizations with which the Secretary-General has entered into arrangements in accordance with article 169, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and other non-governmental organizations invited by the Assembly which have demonstrated their interest in matters under the consideration by the Assembly”, may participate as observers in the Assembly.
3. Paragraphs 5 and 6 under the same rule further provide that “(o)bservers referred to in paragraph 1 (e) of this rule may sit at public meetings of the Assembly, and upon the invitation of the President and subject to the approval by the Assembly may make oral statements on questions within the scope of their activities”, and that “(w)ritten statements submitted by observers referred to in paragraph 1 (e) of this rule within the scope of their activities which are relevant to the work of the Assembly should be made available by the Secretariat in the quantities in the languages in which the statements are submitted”.

Annex

Letter dated 20 April 2009 from the Director of Global and Regional Policy of WWF International to the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority*

The present letter seeks to obtain observer status for WWF International with the International Seabed Authority. WWF is in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. The mission of WWF is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

As such, we are working through international policy forums to ensure that relevant laws and regulations are in place for activities that may be harmful to the environment, and advocate for the precautionary principle as the guiding factor at all stages in exploration and exploitation of natural resources.

The International Seabed Authority is the international body in charge of activities pertaining to the seabed, which is coming increasingly to the attention of mining and prospecting companies as a source of precious raw materials. But the seabed also hosts distinct habitats and ecosystems, many of these central to ocean biodiversity. It is therefore of great interest to WWF to participate in the deliberations at the International Seabed Authority, to which we hope to contribute our conservation expertise.

WWF runs a global programme of work dedicated to ensuring the responsibility of flag States for all activities taking place under their jurisdiction, working with both Governments and with business and industry to ensure responsible use of resources.

Currently, WWF is working to ensure that all potential activities at the Charlie Gibbs Fracture Zone (on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge), recently proposed as a high-seas marine protected area under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, are regulated through relevant international bodies.

It would be an honour for WWF to be granted the status of official observer in the International Seabed Authority. I look forward to hearing from you.

(Signed) Gordon **Shepherd**
Director, Global and Regional Policy, WWF International

* Reproduced as received in the original language of submission.