

Japan's statement on independent of environment plans on 27th

Our delegation would like to join other delegates in expressing the appreciation to the Secretariat for producing the comprehensive document.

Japan's preliminary view on the question of independent assessment of environmental plans is as follows.

Firstly, it is totally understandable that in some cases, the Commission needs to seek external experts for their advice on highly technical issues in which requires special expertise. We encourage the Secretariat and Commission to do so when it needs advice.

The Convention and the DR already provides the Commission and Secretary-General with the capacity to seek advice when they need it from any competent organs of the United Nations, international organizations, and independent experts. Those advices from external experts will be strong voices, as DR 12(5) requires the Commission to take them into account in considering a Plan of Work. Therefore, the selection process of such experts should be transparent, in order to secure those advices are objective, impartial, and purely science-based. We support the the idea of maintaining a roster of independent experts whom States Parties nominate. Utilization of GESAMP (Joint Group of Expert on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Protection) could also be an option.

We understand the Commission itself is a body of experts established by the Convention as a Council's organ. We are open to discuss the Belgian proposal, however, at this stage we do not feel the strong necessity for institutionalizing the considerations of the Plan of Work by external independent experts. It should be noted that those experts and scientists will be entitled to submit comments in the public comment process provided in DR11.

Our delegation believes the expertise of those independent experts should be utilized for assisting the Commission in fulfilling its duties. Their advices are complimentary to the consideration by the Commission. Therefore, the Commission should make the final decision whether a Plan of Work should be approved instead of entrusting that responsibility to external independent scientists.