

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-4836
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 31/03/2023

PROTECTION OF HIGH SEAS

4836. SHRI A. RAJA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) whether any international treaty to protect high seas was concluded recently at the UN Headquarters.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether ocean ecosystems would be improved due to this treaty and if so, the details along with the number of countries that have ratified this treaty; and

(d) whether the equity between the poorer global South and richer North is ensured in the implementation of the treaty and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a & b) The 5th UN Intergovernmental Conference [UNIGC] on 4th March 2023 agreed on the text of a new international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS). The UN General Assembly had, through resolution 72/249 dated 24 December 2017, mandated the convening of the UNIGC.

The Government of India participated in these negotiations through a composite delegation comprising of all stakeholders Ministries/ Departments including the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change, National Biodiversity Authority and the Department of Fisheries.

(c & d) From the perspective of developing countries, the agreement provides for: i) Protection of marine biodiversity; catalogue of species; ii) Provides access to marine genetic resources; iii) Transparency in the governance of marine diversity-protection, preservation, and its exploitation; iv) capacity building and sharing of marine technology and v) Research opportunities for experts in exploration of marine biodiversity.

The text needs to be formally adopted in the coming months before ratification by any country.
