



SBSTTA 23

Montreal, Canada 25 - 29 November 2019

Agenda Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**Results of the regional workshop to facilitate the description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas in the North-East Atlantic ocean**

Thank you Madam Chair.

This statement is made on behalf of International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB).

The IIFB note the comprehensive workshop report CBD/EBSA/WS/2019/1/5.

The IIFB supports the observations of participants of the workshop which recognized that indigenous peoples and local communities in the North-East Atlantic have a significant amount of endemic, traditional knowledge relevant to the description of Ecologically or Biologically Conserved Areas.

Science should be considered an inclusive process for all participants that builds long-term relationships that have importance beyond any workshop. Building enduring relationships is a core principle of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities commonplace practices.

It should also be acknowledged that many Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities groups may not be willing to travel outside their territories and may not feel it is appropriate to talk generally about issues and values outside their own locality. New approaches are needed where the researchers visit the regions where knowledge holders develop and practice their traditional activities rather than the other way around.

We recognize that the states have their role related to proposing modifications of existing Ecologically or Biologically Conserved Areas and in description of new Ecologically or Biologically Conserved Areas. Beyond that we think the knowledge holders, including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities holding Indigenous and Local Knowledge, hold vital knowledge about potential Ecologically or Biologically Conserved Areas and should have the option through the free, prior and informed consent process to be included in further processes.

As requested at SBSTTA 22, the IIFB would like to again encourage a future global dialogue to be devoted to Indigenous and Local Knowledge linked to customary sustainable use of oceans and marine areas and to support a pathway for the equitable and ethical inclusion of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas defined by us and inclusive of our knowledge systems. Such a theme would attract many different actors and address several Aichi Biodiversity Targets and as well as Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you Madam Chair.