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Interactive dialogue 7: Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

The SARGADOM project is a partnership between MarViva Foundation, The Sargasso Sea Commission, the University of Brest and the French Biodiversity Agency, that aims to improve the protection of biodiversity and to maintain ecosystem services in two sensitive high seas areas: the Thermal Dome and the Sargasso Sea, and facilitate the design of hybrid ocean governance models.

Distinguished delegates, and ocean friends, we would like to call your attention over the Thermal Dome, a representative site of the diversity and importance of the ecosystems of the High Seas. It is an extensive marine upwelling region in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, off the west coast of Central America. Due to the high productivity in the area, fishing industries from many countries that depend on pelagic species, such as tuna, are linked to ecological and oceanic processes generated in this region. The Thermal Dome is also of great relevance for species of high conservation value, including blue whales, which travel thousands of miles from the Pacific Coast of North America to feed and have their offsprings there.

Respectfully, **we offer our support to the governments to collaborate with the High Ambition Coalition on BBNJ launched at the One Ocean Summit on the establishment of a technical group dedicated to study and develop management proposals for the Thermal Dome.** We understand the complexity of its management and we would like to support the process to create the possible scenarios for a sustainable governance of this important site in the High Seas. In doing so, we pursue to contribute to the discussions about the elements of the UN negotiations on BBNJ and inform on possible implementation models for regional and global coordination.

We resonate with the global scientific community about the urgency of adopting a legally binding agreement to protect biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions. The development of governance models for sites like the Thermal Dome is crucial for ensuring a successful implementation of the treaty. We call on the governments and regional partnerships to lead the road for the conservation of our ocean for today and future generations.

