

references to the Antarctic.

Malaysia replied that though it had a special interest in Antarctica, the fact is that PrepCom I had asked the Secretariat to examine environmental problems in the polar regions and thus they were obligated to provide a comprehensive report on this important issue. The delegate stated that UNCED is a Conference about global environmental problems and thus should be able to address any areas, such as the polar regions, which are an intrinsic part of the global eco-system – Treaty or no Treaty.

Marine Biodiversity

This issue was addressed by a number of delegations, and if it does not merit a separate section in the revised PC/42/Add.6, it will likely form a key part of the section on integrated coastal zone management and revisions to PC/42/Add.4 on biological diversity.

In a notable intervention, Australia proposed that a number of points on "tropical coastal zone management" should be incorporated in Agenda 21. The delegate listed a number of phenomena which threaten to degrade tropical marine ecosystems, including changes in temperature, climate, salinity, water circulation, and ultraviolet radiation. As well, he noted that human activities, in addition to causing direct damage to ecosystems (destroying coral reefs and mangrove swamps), can cause associated problems of sedimentation and phytoplankton "blooms." In addition to strengthening international agreements and strategies to deal with marine degradation caused by land- and sea-based activities, the delegate noted that further efforts were required. In this respect, he raised an initiative by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) (and endorsed by Greenpeace) to create a global representative system of marine protected areas. The aims of such a programme would be:

- to divide each marine realm into its major constituent biogeographical zones;
- to identify gaps in the representation in marine protected areas (MPAs) of those zones; and
- to propose possible sites for the establishment of MPAs to fill those gaps.

This proposal will be incorporated into a message from the IUCN Congress in Caracas in February 1992 for transmission and hopefully adoption by UNCED.

A number of countries, such as China, Colombia, Senegal, Solomon Island, and Sweden, commented that special attention had to be paid to tropical marine ecosystems. One way this could be accomplished was through regional seas programmes, which a number of delegations, such as Finland and Nigeria, stated were essentially designed to focus on the specific requirements of regional marine ecosystems. Malaysia and Chile noted further that sometimes ecosystems were a