

Achieving Truly Global Stewardship of the Deep Ocean

Lucy Woodall, University of Oxford & Nekton lucy.woodall@zoo.ox.ac.uk

Paris Stefanoudis, University of Oxford & Nekton paris.stefanoudis@zoo.ox.ac.uk

Daniel Wagner, Conservation International, dwagner@conservation.org

Diva Amon, Natural History Museum London, divaamon@gmail.com

Kerry Sink, South African National Biodiversity Institute, K.Sink@sanbi.org.za

Angelo O'Connor Villagomez, The Pew Charitable Trusts, avillagomez@pewtrusts.org

The deep ocean harbours unique biodiversity and resources, and provides essential services that are critical to life on Earth. As such, continued exploration and enhanced knowledge of deep-ocean ecosystems, followed by appropriate conservation and sustainable management of its resources, are essential to ensure human wellbeing and our planet's prosperity. Deep-sea habitats are widespread across the High Seas and in the national waters of >70% of countries, however, to date, deep-sea exploration has primarily been conducted by an exclusive club of high-income countries. This has led to biases in data collected, regions explored, approaches applied and questions addressed. Co-occurring multilateral negotiations (e.g., Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, Convention on Biological Diversity Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework) and international programmes (e.g., UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development) provide a unique opportunity to re-address these practices and for deep-sea scientists to provide a powerful unified and inclusive approach to investigate the ocean more equitably to benefit more of humankind. In this session, we seek to explore actions and products that will help achieve fairer access to the benefits and stewardship of the deep ocean. This could include, but is not limited to, low-cost technologies, good research and capacity development practices, tools for effective science communication and engagement, ways of sharing and accessing academic literature, and tangible actions for increasing representation. This will provide practical guidance to scientific, management, policy and funding committees to help shape a more equitable future of the deep ocean for generations to come.