



**Invitation to endorse the attached letter to the UN General Assembly
regarding progress made in the protection of deep sea ecosystems**

10 July 2009

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to invite you to add your name to a growing list of scientists who wish to bridge the science-policy abyss in the deep seas. Bottom fishing, particularly trawling, continues to harm deep sea ecosystems. There has been little progress meeting UN commitments, and until these are met, we are again asking the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to halt bottom fishing on the high seas until the UN rules are followed.

The attached statement, in formal UN language, reviews progress to date with regard to the 2006 UN Resolution 61/105 to protect deep sea ecosystems, which was to have been implemented by 31 December 2008. It concludes that while some progress has been made, most existing commitments have not been met, and scientific information has not been incorporated.

Past scientific statements played an important role in drawing the UN's attention to vulnerable and valuable organisms in the deep seas, such as cold-water corals, sponges, and seamount communities. These statements, along with a lot of work from many non-governmental and governmental bodies, built a strong case for protection of vulnerable organisms and habitats, resulting in the landmark 2006 UN Resolution 61/105. This resolution came about after intense negotiations and was seen as a compromise between an outright moratorium on bottom trawling, and business as usual.

This autumn, the UNGA will be reviewing progress made in implementing UN Resolution 61/105. We believe that it is critical that the scientific community voice its concern over the slow pace of progress towards protecting deep sea ecosystems. The attached statement will be presented to the UNGA, and we are requesting that you sign it. If you agree, please email Elizabeth Rauer (elizabeth.rauer@mcbi.org) or visit our web page: www.mcbi.org/what/highseas_letter.htm. Please feel free to contact us with your questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

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