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MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Senate supports Government push on bottom trawling

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The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition welcomes the Australian Senate vote calling for Australia to pursue all diplomatic avenues to ensure Australia's position on high seas bottom trawling is adopted at the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

The Senate late yesterday agreed, with cross party support, to a motion put forward by Greens Senator Rachel Siewert acknowledging support for the recently announced Government position, supporting bans on high seas bottom trawl fishing.

The Senate vote follows two days of negotiations last week at the UNGA regarding measures to be adopted at this year's UNGA to stop destructive fishing practices such as bottom trawling on the high seas.

Deep Sea Conservation Coalition Australia Coordinator, Ms Lyn Goldsworthy, said "Australia's proposal was well-received at the meeting last week but there are significant blocks. Australia will need to push hard to make sure its position is agreed by the UNGA."

"The momentum towards a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling is building. An increasing number of states support a moratorium on unregulated high seas bottom trawling. Scientists have put the case for urgent action. We also know some states are opposed with the main stumbling blocks being Canada, Japan and the European Union as a whole, despite the fact that many EU States support the moratorium" she said.

"Australia really needs to get out there now and convince these countries that a moratorium is the only effective means of protecting fragile deep sea ecosystems. Even the United States is now supporting a moratorium on unregulated high seas bottom trawling".

"Anything less than the Australia position will be a very sad day for deep sea creatures and their ecosystems" concluded Ms Goldsworthy.

The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition is calling for an immediate global moratorium on all high seas bottom trawling to allow time for scientific research of deep sea habitats and until sustainable management measures are implemented.

Negotiations will continue on an informal bilateral basis until 17-22 November when another round of negotiations will take place prior to formal decisions at the UNGA in early December.

For further information contact:

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Background information available at www.savethehighseas.org

The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition is an alliance of over 50 international organizations, representing millions of people in countries around the world. It is calling for a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling until the nations of the world can establish strong management measures for deep-sea fisheries and protect biodiversity on the high seas.

Australian Members: Australian Conservation Foundation,
The Wilderness Society and Greenpeace Australia Pacific.