

**Oliver Tanqueray**

**Sustainable Seafood Coalition Coordinator**

I am Oliver Tanqueray from the environmental law charity ClientEarth. Today I am representing the Sustainable Seafood Coalition in the UK, the Hong Kong Sustainable Seafood Coalition and the Global Tuna Alliance. Together these organisations represent more than 85 seafood industry stakeholders.

These businesses have collaborated to develop a joint position statement on the importance of a robust High Seas Treaty – a statement which can now be accessed on the Sustainable Seafood Coalition website. This is the first time the seafood supply chain has taken an aligned public stance on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). In our statement, we collectively recognise commercial fisheries as the largest direct driver of biodiversity decline in the High Seas, and call for transformative change to address this.

You might ask why seafood businesses – many of whom source only from inshore fisheries or farms – are interested in advocating for a legally binding instrument to regulate human activities on and in the High Seas. But the science is clear; the resilience of coastal fisheries – including those accessed by small-scale artisanal fishers – is inextricably linked to the health of the High Seas. Overfishing and other damaging activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction negatively impact coastal communities and ecosystems. This is why negotiating a Treaty that provides for precautionary environmental assessments of cumulative impacts and engages all relevant stakeholders is so important.

In the face of combined climate and biodiversity emergencies, these businesses are taking a stand to encourage policymakers, negotiators and UN institutions to commit to a robust and ambitious High Seas Treaty. Anyone participating in this dialogue that can influence the outcomes of the treaty should know major industry stakeholders support bold action towards transformational change in how we regulate human activity on and in the High Seas.

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