



2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Protecting the Ocean: Time for Action for the High Ambition Coalition on BBNJ

30 June 2022, 17h30, Committee Room

Organized by: Portugal, French Presidency of the EU, the European
Commission and High Seas Alliance

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The conclusion of an international legally binding agreement to address the conservation and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity of the ocean beyond national jurisdiction is intrinsically linked with SDG 14 and the achieving of many of its targets. The negotiations of such agreement, the “BBNJ Treaty”, are entering their final stage, after a lengthy process, as the 4th Intergovernmental Conference closed with a sense of momentum towards the conclusion of the agreement at the IGC-5, already scheduled for August.

The High Ambition Coalition (HAC) launched in Brest, early this year, is a call to the conclusion of the BBNJ Treaty by the end of 2022. Before the event, the EU Commission and 47 countries, including all the EU member States, had signed the HAC declaration.

The UN Ocean Conference, in Lisbon, as the last major ocean related event before the IGC-5, presented a unique opportunity to reaffirm the declaration and enlarge the political support towards the conclusion of the BBNJ Treaty.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

Co-organizers at Ministerial level underlined the urgency of concluding this negotiations and appealed others to join the High Ambition Coalition for BBNJ and its goal of concluding the BBNJ Treaty by the end of 2022. Actions needed to ensure its successful conclusion in 2022 were identified.

Panelists were requested to answer the following questions:

- What is the major element you would like to see in the BBNJ agreement? where do you see the added value of the BBNJ over existing mechanisms to protect the ocean?
- What needs to happen in the coming months to find agreement on the difficult sticky points?

IGC President for BBNJ gave the state of play of the negotiations and outlook for the future.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Make the conclusion of an international legally binding agreement to address the conservation and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity of the ocean beyond national jurisdiction in 2022 a political priority.
- Prepare intersessionally to deliver the goal of concluding this historical agreement, including by working on joint regional proposals.
- Call on political leaders to give clear orientations to their negotiators but also flexibility to resolve most of the sticky points.

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

The conclusion of an international legally binding agreement to address the conservation and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity of the ocean beyond national jurisdiction in 2022, with Palau and Iceland announcing their decision to join the High Ambition Coalition on BBNJ.