2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Criminal law as planetary safeguard: paradigm shifts in ocean protection

Thursday June 30th, 8am - 9:30 am Online

Organized by: Stop Ecocide International, Stop Ecocide Foundation, Gallifrey Foundation, Mana Pacific Impact Company, Seawilding, Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Global Choices

Background on the event

We are dependent on healthy marine and coastal ecosystems for billions of livelihoods around the world, as well as regulation of weather and climate. However, existing laws are proving inadequate to deter and protect from the destructive side effects of many industrial practices and exploratory extractive projects. Momentum is growing around the world towards criminalising severe and either widespread or long-term damage to ecosystems (increasingly known as "ecocide") at the international level, which could create a desperately needed legal safety rail for commercial activity, deterring the worst harms, strengthening existing laws and, importantly, creating the enabling framework for strategic change and innovation.

Key Issues discussed

- When the oceans lose their regenerative capacity, we face profound, even existential crisis.
- The inadequacy of existing legal frameworks to protect our oceans from industrial practices and extractive projects
- The potential of a new international crime of ecocide to provide both protection and a guardrail to less destructive, more sustainable practices.

- How this powerful legal initiative can protect key marine ecosystems into the future, deterring severe threats, transforming our relationship with the oceans and protecting our own place on our planetary home.

Key recommendations for action

That governments across the world support the creation of a new international crime of ecocide at the International Criminal Court.

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

Stop Ecocide International commits to continuing to inform and educate about how legal frameworks can help protect our oceans and their ecosystems