

STATEMENT: THE NATURE CONSERVANCY - July 2024

- **Presenter: Andreas Hansen - Director of Global Ocean Policy**
- **On behalf of: High Seas Alliance**

As delivered – 2 July 2024, approx. 12:40pm.

Thank you Madam Co-Chair for the opportunity to address this conference. My name is Andreas Hansen and I am the Director for Global Ocean Policy at The Nature Conservancy. I am delivering this statement on behalf of the High Seas Alliance, an alliance with more than 60 members that promote greater and more effective protection of the High Seas.

Last year, the High Seas Alliance celebrated with all of you the adoption of the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction – commonly known as the High Seas (BBNJ) Treaty. The agreement was a significant triumph for multilateralism and provided a boost for effective ocean governance in areas that cover half of our planet.

However, for this historic ocean milestone to be effective, it needs to be ratified by at least 60 countries. Since its opening for signature in September 2023, 8 countries have now ratified, and 91 countries have signed it. Just last week, governments convened here in New York for the Treaty’s first Preparatory Committee meeting to prepare for its first Conference of Parties, and we were greatly encouraged by the spirit of collaboration.

Progress is being made, but time is not on our side to address the biodiversity and climate crises. Just 1% of the high seas are protected and climate impacts are compounding. We need to move swiftly to better protect our ocean.

The theme of the 3rd UN Ocean Conference is “Accelerating Action” for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean. High Seas Alliance urges all countries to ratify the new High Seas Treaty ahead of this important meeting, and to prepare for its implementation through, for example, supporting the preparation of science and traditional knowledge to underpin Marine Protected Area proposals. This would be a strong signal of commitment to accelerating action, a momentous start for the Conference, and we therefore strongly support panel 9.

Thank you.