

Ocean Vision Legal

Dr. Anna Rebay von Ehrenwiesen, CEO and Founder

Esteemed colleagues and delegates, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I deliver this statement not only on behalf of Ocean Vision Legal, but the Ocean itself.

Article 192 UNCLOS obliges States to protect and preserve the marine environment. This customary obligation is incumbent on all States. Ratifying international environmental treaties is only the starting point. States must take active measures to protect the marine environment and prevent harm to its vital cycles, processes, and functions - measures that must be grounded in the best available science, both Western and Indigenous.

One crucial measure States must adopt under the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment is designating marine protected areas that are fit for purpose - a marine area cannot be deemed to be protected where destructive practices, such as bottom trawling, are permitted to continue.

This will contribute to ensuring that the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is realised, because human rights and Ocean rights are inextricably linked.

Ocean Vision Legal is committed to supporting States by providing capacity building on what this obligation entails and how to elevate it from paper to practice. Advisory Opinions from International courts are a key way in which States obligations can be clarified.

As noted in the UN Pact for the Future, a fundamental shift in how humanity relates to and uses the Ocean is vital in order to achieve a future in harmony with Nature. Both the enforcement of existing law, and the creation of new law is needed. We can create this shift and an ethical human-Ocean relationship by respecting the Ocean's inherent rights and intrinsic value as the life support system of our planet.

Thank you.