



UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE NICE, FRANCE 2025

UNOC3 Conference Side Event

Celebrating High Seas Action: Accelerating the Race for Ratification & Ambitious Implementation of the BBNJ agreement

Monday, 9 June 2025 12.15-13.30 , Room 3, Blue Zone- UNOC3, Nice, France

Organized by

Governments: Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, European Union, France, Germany, Republic of Korea, Nigeria, The Maldives, Palau, Philippines, Seychelles

Organisations: High Seas Alliance, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Bloomberg Philanthropies Ocean Initiatives, The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Background on the event (one paragraph)

This event on the first day of the UN Ocean Conference was organised to celebrate new ratifications of the High Seas Treaty (formally titled the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and progress to achieving the key milestone of 60 countries' ratifications required for it to enter into force. It was a clear display of global political will and high-level political momentum to accelerate ratification and implementation efforts of the High Seas Treaty, including the announcement of key initiatives driving action by governments, key stakeholders- such as civil society, indigenous peoples, youth and philanthropy.

Key Issues discussed (5-8 bullet points)

The event discussed and reaffirmed in the context of the new High Seas Treaty, the importance of global solidarity and urgency, implementation grounded in equity, science, and collaboration, a precautionary approach to harmful activities such as deep-sea mining, inclusivity and traditional knowledge in governance and commitment to 30x30 and beyond.

The event included announcements on:

- **recent and new signings and ratifications** that would be happening at UNOC. During the week a further 19 countries ratified, and 20 countries signed the Treaty.

- **the re-launch of High Ambition Coalition (HAC) of governments for BBNJ** that is being co-chaired by Palau, Seychelles and the European Union, aimed at accelerating Treaty ratification and implementation.
- **initiatives to support the development of High Seas MPA proposals**, including Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI) that has allocated 20 million euros towards supporting the development of marine protected area (MPA) proposals, the ECOWAS initiative in West and the BBNJ First Movers initiative.
- **efforts to support capacity building for implementation efforts** including the component 1 of the EU's Global Ocean Programme's [Technical Assistance Facility \(TAF\)](#) that offers on-demand, targeted support to help countries and regional intergovernmental organisations strengthen their legal, institutional, and scientific capacities to engage in the BBNJ Agreement and other high seas biodiversity-related processes.
- **additional philanthropic pledges**, including the Minderoo Foundation pledge of AUD 10 million (approximately USD 6.5 million) to accelerate the creation of High Seas MPAs that adds to the joint donor pledge of USD 58.2 million.

Key recommendations for action / voluntary commitments

1. **Accelerate Ratification and Entry into Force of the High Seas Treaty** to reach the 60-country threshold quickly.
2. **Prepare for Effective and Inclusive Implementation of the High Seas Treaty**, and the importance on the need to align domestic policies and legislation with BBNJ obligations. Additionally, implementation should be equitable and inclusive, especially for small island developing states and developing countries.
3. **Support for MPAs and Area-Based Management Tools (ABMTs)** to meet the **30x30 global target**, particularly the importance of accelerating MPA proposals for submission to the first High Seas Treaty Conference of Parties.
4. **Strengthen Scientific, Financial, and Technical Support** to ensure the necessary capacity to support implementation.
5. **Promote Multilateralism and Global Cooperation.** The High Seas Treaty has been widely praised as a success story for multilateralism. It is important to continue to coordinate closely, including working in coalitions, such as the BBNJ HAC, the First Movers Initiative and the ECOWAS, as well ensuring participation in the recommendations being made during the UN Preparatory Commission Sessions to help shape the set-up of the High Seas Treaty's institutions and processes.
6. **Uplift Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous Voices** as essential for implementation of the High Seas Treaty.