



THE HIGH SEAS TREATY SYMPOSIUM
From negotiation to implementation
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Commitment to the Implementation of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement

A joint statement from the organisers of the *High Seas Treaty Symposium: from negotiation to implementation*.

We welcome the recently adopted Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, otherwise known as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, and congratulate all signatories to this historic instrument.

A product of a series of multilateral discussions and negotiations spanning almost two decades, we recognise the paramount importance of the BBNJ Agreement in safeguarding the health and sustainability of our global ocean and marine biodiversity and hereby express our firm and collective commitment to its future implementation.

We are mindful of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution, which also strongly affects marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, and acknowledge the global ocean emergency that we now find ourselves in and which requires serious and immediate attention.

The BBNJ Agreement provides an unprecedented opportunity to establish a comprehensive and equitable framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in areas beyond national jurisdiction that cover 64% of the ocean's surface and nearly 95% of its volume.

We support the packaged approach and call on all actors to pursue ambitious action to fortify the foundational pillars of the BBNJ Agreement by ensuring: a fair and equitable system for the access of and benefit sharing of marine genetic resources; the establishment of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, and effectively protecting at least 30% of marine areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction; a strong and robust process for conducting and reviewing environmental impact assessments; and the strengthening of capacity, especially for the Global South, through the transfer of technology, sharing of research, training programmes and financial support. We believe that these pillars are supported through effective institutional mechanisms, that underpin cross-sectoral collaboration and foster collective action, as well as enhance compliance transparency.

We also believe that decisions under the BBNJ Agreement should be informed by the best available science as well as traditional and indigenous knowledge and appreciate non-tangible aspects such as the spiritual and cultural value of the marine environment.

In working together with other arrangements and supporting their functioning, we understand that other regimes and actors operating in areas beyond national jurisdiction shall mutually respect and not undermine the purposes of the BBNJ Agreement or restrict its ambitions and objectives.

Our shared commitment to the future implementation of the BBNJ Agreement is driven by the following principles and objectives:



- **Ecosystem Health and Resilience:** We recognise the intrinsic value of marine biodiversity and the importance of maintaining healthy, resilient ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** We are dedicated to ensuring that the benefits of marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use are equitably shared among all nations and communities, including those that are most vulnerable.
- **Precaution and Polluter-Pays:** We encourage the adoption of precautionary measures and decisions to be taken in favour of nature in cases of doubt as well as to fully reflect all environmental externalities.
- **Coherence and Non-Regression:** We underline the need for coherence among regimes and actors in areas beyond national jurisdiction to achieve the purposes and objectives of the BBNJ Agreement and commit to consistently strive for increased ambition in ocean action.
- **Scientific Excellence:** We emphasise the critical role of science, including indigenous and traditional knowledge, in informing decision-making and pledge to support research, data collection, and knowledge sharing to enhance our understanding of marine biodiversity in these areas.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** We recognise that addressing the complex challenges of marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use requires international multidisciplinary collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders.
- **Capacity Building:** We commit to assisting nations, especially in the Global South, in building their capacity to actively participate in the BBNJ Agreement's implementation, including through technology transfer, financial support, and training programs.
- **Public Awareness and Engagement:** We will work to raise public awareness about the importance of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction and foster engagement among stakeholders at all levels.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** We advocate for transparency and accountability in the management of marine resources beyond national jurisdiction, including through monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

In light of these principles and objectives, we call on governments, organisations, and individuals around the world to join us in our commitment to the future implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. Together, we can ensure the sustainable future of our shared ocean and the rich biodiversity it contains, thereby contributing to the well-being of current and future generations.

The time to act is now. We urge all governments to embrace and promptly bring the BBNJ Agreement into force and invite all stakeholders to actively and faithfully engage in the implementation process, collaborate, and work tirelessly towards a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future for our global oceans and marine life beyond national jurisdiction for the benefit of all kind.

Sincerely,

The Organising Committee

- Prof. J Murray Roberts, Professor of Applied Marine Biology and Ecology, University of Edinburgh / Coordinator, iAtlantic
- Prof. Marcel Jaspars, Professor of Chemistry, University of Aberdeen
- Prof. David Johnson, Director, Seascope Consultants/ Coordinator, GOBI
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Endorsed by:

[Your Name] [Your Title/Position] [Your Organisation]*

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