

PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release:

26th August 2022

TREATY TALKS END WITHOUT RESOLUTION IN NEW YORK

2022 deadline fades as NGOs ask, 'what now?'

Long running negotiations to conclude a new international Treaty to protect the ocean have been suspended without success at the UN HQ in New York.

The UN General Assembly resolution which convened the negotiations, mandated that they should be concluded by the end of 2022 and this was the final scheduled session. The process was suspended during a night session by the President of the Conference, however, recognising that a conclusion was not yet within reach.

Members of the High Seas Alliance are asking States what they intend to do now.

"We're disappointed that governments at the UN did not bring the High Seas Treaty over the finish line this week. However, it has been uplifting to witness the global momentum for ocean action steadily build throughout these negotiations. Communities across the world are asking for decisive ocean action to protect marine life and safeguard the vital role the ocean plays for the climate, global food security and the overall health of our planet. States must now build on the progress made and deliver on their promise for an ambitious Treaty by the end of 2022," said Sofia Tsenikli, Senior Strategic Advisor to the High Seas Alliance (HSA).

In a process which was started at the Rio+20 UN Conference in 2012, States have tried to negotiate a Treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) – the ocean beyond Exclusive Economic Zones, which makes up 70% of the ocean.

The work needed to reach the final Treaty could be completed relatively quickly if States are willing to cooperate, keeping the 2022 deadline alive.

This is essential if the world is to achieve the goal of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030 - something which cannot be achieved without the Treaty.

Lisa Speer, NRDC: "We got very close on the conservation elements of the treaty. I am confident we can get a strong treaty over the finish line if countries come together and resolve the remaining issues in 2022."

Liz Karan, director of Pew's campaign to protect life on the high seas said: "While it's disappointing that the treaty wasn't finalized during this latest round of negotiations, we remain encouraged by the progress that was made. "More than 40 governments participating in the talks have publicly

committed to reaching an agreement in 2022. We urge all delegates to sustain this momentum and complete the treaty by the end of 2022.”

Gladys Martínez, Executive Director of AIDA: "We are confident that the Latin American region will be represented in the next stage of these negotiations in as committed a manner as it has been so far. Special thanks to Costa Rica for all its dedication and commitment to ensure the highest standards for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, also known as the High Seas."

Fabienne McLellan, Managing Director, OceanCare: “The past two weeks have seen many ups and downs. It has been a true rollercoaster of emotions. While governments have fallen just short of finalising a High Seas Treaty, we were encouraged to see a profound spirit of ambition and willingness to conclude negotiations. The catastrophic state of our ocean demands a transformative change to how we treat our ocean. We are not quite there yet and governments must now not lose momentum and finalise an ambitious Treaty in 2022.”

Laura Meller of Greenpeace’s Protect the Oceans campaign said: “The oceans sustain all life on Earth, but for the last two weeks, the self-proclaimed High Ambition Coalition has not shown enough ambition or urgency until the final hours. As a result, they have failed to deliver a strong Global Ocean Treaty that can protect the High Seas. They promised a Treaty in 2022, and time has all but run out. They shouldn’t shoulder all responsibility, other countries have been deliberately obstructive, but failure to deliver a Treaty at these talks jeopardises the livelihoods and food security of billions of people around the world.”

Susanna Fuller, VP Oceans North: “At this most urgent time for our ocean, failure to come to an agreement for the protection of spaces and species is not an option. Countries - including Canada - committed to conclude by the end of 2022, leaving just a few months to live up to their collective responsibility.”

Lance Morgan, President, Marine Conservation Institute” Clearly significant progress towards the treaty was made during this fifth session, but I am disappointed that despite growing evidence of devastating impacts to marine life and calls for much higher ambition we did not reach a treaty. Time is not on our side and we must accelerate our efforts to protect the largest ecosystem on our planet.”

ENDS

PRESS TEAM

Patricia Roy +34 696 905 907 - CET
Michael Crocker +1 207 522 1366 - EST
Mirella von Lindenfels +44 7717 844 352 – EST/BST
Sophie Hulme + 44 7973 712869 - EST/BST

SPOKESPEOPLE AND EXPERTS

Canada

Susanna Fuller – Oceans North – +902-483-5033 (English)

UK

Will - Greenpeace - UK - will.mccallum@greenpeace.org (English)

EU

Sofia Tsenikli – High Seas Alliance – stsenikli@gmail.com (English, Greek)

Veronica Frank – Greenpeace – veronica.frank@greenpeace.org (Italian, English)

Latin America

Mariamalia Chavez – AIDA (Asociación Intermaericana para la Defensa del Ambiente) – mariamalia.rodriguez.chaves@gmail.com (Spanish, English)

Gladys Martinez – AIDA (Asociación Intermaericana para la Defensa del Ambiente) – gmartinez@aida-americas.org (Spanish, English)

US

Lisa Speer – National Resources Defense Council – lspeer@nrdc.org (English)

Liz Karan – The Pew Charitable Trusts – EKaran@pewtrusts.org (English)

Pacific

Duncan Currie – International Law of the Sea expert – +64 21 632 335 (English)