



MARINE BIODIVERSITY: LANDMARK AGREEMENT ADOPTED

After nearly two decades of negotiations, countries convened at UN Headquarters in New York on 19 June 2023 to adopt a historic agreement to advance conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. The new agreement “is critical to addressing the threats facing the ocean, and to the success of ocean-related goals and targets, including the 2030 Agenda and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

The ocean, the lungs of our planet, is in a state of emergency driven by climate change and plastic pollution causing biodiversity and habitat loss. Carbon emissions from human activities are causing ocean warming, acidification and oxygen loss. Toxic chemicals and millions of tons of plastic waste are flooding into areas beyond national jurisdiction, where large systems of ocean currents are acting as zones of accumulation for plastic pollution, known as the “garbage patches”. The accumulation of such litter and plastic debris may pose a threat to diverse marine life, causing killing or injuring fish, sea turtles, seabirds and marine mammals, and making their way into the food chain and ultimately being consumed by humans.



More than 17 million metric tons of plastic entered the world’s ocean in 2021, making up 85 per cent of marine litter, and projections are expected to double or triple each year by 2040, according to the latest SDG report. According to UN estimates, by 2050, there could be more plastic in the sea than fish unless action is taken.

New Agreement builds on UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

The new Agreement, which addresses marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, also known as the BBNJ Agreement builds on the legacy of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and provides a legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in over two-thirds of the ocean.





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It aims at strengthening international cooperation to that end. The implementation of the Agreement is expected to make significant contributions to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Framework seeks to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

For more information on the Agreement, please visit <https://www.un.org/bbnj/>

Marine
fisheries
provide

58.5 MILLION
jobs
globally

and provide the **primary source of protein** to over

50% of the world's population

