



Media briefing - IGC5: The final negotiations for a Global Ocean Treaty - New York, August 15 - 26

- [Intergovernmental Conference 5 \(IGC5\)](#) is the final negotiation for a new Global Ocean Treaty (also known as BBNJ - Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction). This Treaty would improve the dysfunctional system of global ocean governance “to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction”.
- Crucially, a strong Treaty would provide a mechanism by which vast ocean sanctuaries, off limits to harmful activities, could be created on the high seas.
- This would make it possible to deliver 30x30 - at least 30% of our planet’s oceans fully protected by 2030. [Scientific evidence is clear: this is the absolute minimum required to give the oceans space to recover](#). Without a strong Treaty being finalised in 2022, it will be almost impossible to deliver 30x30.
- [49 countries have committed at the highest political level to deliver an ambitious Treaty in 2022](#). It’s vital that these commitments become a reality.
- With no more space in the 2022 UN calendar, **IGC5 in August is the last chance for governments** to meet their commitments and finalise an ambitious Treaty in 2022 to show they are serious about ocean protection.
- This briefing sets out what a “strong” Global Ocean Treaty requires. A strong Treaty provides hope for the future of the oceans. A weak Treaty maintains a broken status quo and will do nothing to remedy the ocean crisis.

Defining a strong Global Ocean Treaty:

- Greenpeace views the following 6 points as the defining criteria for the final Global Ocean Treaty text being strong enough to deliver for the oceans:
 - 1) A strong Treaty must allow states, through a Conference of Parties (COP), **to establish ocean sanctuaries off limits to destructive activities when there is a scientific case**. That means empowering the COP to establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and adopt management plans with specific protective measures, working closely with, but without deferring to, existing dysfunctional bodies which are



responsible for the ocean crisis.

- 2) The text must **recognise the ability of the COP to make decisions by vote when a consensus cannot be achieved**, without allowing a single country to block progress.
- 3) The MPA definition **must allow for fully protected ocean sanctuaries**, which are the most cost-effective. The final definition must avoid language that hinders this, for example by forcing “sustainable use” objectives to be defined for all MPAs.
- 4) **Fishing and other activities regulated by existing bodies must be included within the scope of a new Treaty**. Deferring decisions on these activities to existing siloed management bodies will maintain a broken status quo.
- 5) Pending the establishment of an MPA, the COP **must have powers to adopt interim or emergency measures to avoid harm to the area**.
- 6) A strong Treaty must set as a primary objective the **establishment of a global network of MPAs**, to ensure the Treaty is fit to deliver the 30x30 ambition in areas beyond national jurisdictions.

Laura Meller of Greenpeace’s Protect the Oceans campaign said: “These negotiations are a once in a generation opportunity to save the blue part of our blue planet. The oceans sustain all life on earth. They regulate our climate, provide livelihoods and sustenance for billions of people and are home to so much of our planet’s biodiversity.

“For almost two decades, leaders have talked and delayed, while the ocean crisis continues to deepen. Now is the time for leaders to deliver on their commitments, and finalise a strong Global Ocean Treaty.”

- The treaty also must provide fair, equitable access and sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources and provide for effective capacity building and transfer of marine technology to ensure equitable use of the high seas.



- A strong Treaty will recognise and strengthen the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, who are essential to protecting marine biodiversity.
- A strong treaty also will promote coordination between the new Treaty regime and existing bodies, instead of undermining them. This means removing terms which entrench the siloed status quo with language such as “respects the competence of” or vague references to “relevant” bodies.
- A strong Treaty will also set minimum standards globally for assessing the environmental impact of activities in areas beyond national jurisdictions, and empower the COP to review and decide whether a proposed activities can proceed, and under what conditions.

State of play:

- Discussions on a new Treaty began almost two decades ago. In these two decades, marine habitats and biodiversity have been lost at an unprecedented rate. According to an analysis of the IUCN red list, 118 more marine species have been deemed critically endangered in the last two decades.
- Since Treaty negotiations began, there has been some political progress. For example, the US, which has traditionally been one of the fiercest opponents to the Treaty, is now calling for an ambitious Treaty to be finalised in 2022. Likewise Iceland, Canada and Norway, once major blocker nations in the negotiations, have joined the High Ambition Coalition of 49 countries calling for a strong Treaty in 2022.
- At the UN Ocean Conference many heads of states and governments made similar commitments. However, there is a general mis-match between these high level commitments and governments’ negotiating positions which are simply promoting the broken status quo. Governments need to show ambition not only on the timeline for the conclusion, and significantly improve their negotiating positions to conclude a truly ambitious Treaty that delivers real protection in August.
- There are still significant blockers to progress in negotiations. [Russia and Iceland, for example, continue to call for fisheries to be excluded from the final text \(despite Iceland having recently joined the High Ambition Coalition\)](#). The High Seas Alliance will launch an Ambition Tracker, grouping countries into



those who support healthy oceans and those who don't. It will launch the week before IGC5.

- The successful conclusion of Global Ocean Treaty negotiations in 2022 will largely depend on the EU, which is the key deal breaker in these negotiations. But in spite of the EU and the EU Member States repeatedly claiming to be global ocean champions, fighting for a high ambition Global Ocean Treaty in 2022, the EU continues to promote the broken status quo.
- The last round of negotiations, IGC4, in March 2022 ended in failure. The glacial pace of negotiations meant no final Treaty was agreed, forcing delegates to return for this final round of negotiations at IGC5. Every moment of delay means further losses of marine habitats and biodiversity.
- Communities around the world, on the frontlines of the ocean crisis, already are feeling the impacts. Healthy oceans provide sustenance and livelihoods for billions of people, but industrial fishing is devastating fish populations globally, and as the oceans warm and acidify, their ability to support life is being diminished.
- Delegates from these frontline communities will join Greenpeace at the United Nations in New York to tell their stories directly to negotiators, and send them a message that while they talk, their communities are suffering.

Greenpeace spokespeople will be on the ground in New York for IGC5 and are available for interviews in the following languages:

Will McCallum, Head of Oceans, Greenpeace UK: **English**

Pilar Marcos Rodriguez, Head of Communications, Greenpeace Spain: **Spanish, English**

Veronica Frank, Senior Political Advisor, Greenpeace International: **Italian, Portuguese, English**

Awa Traore, Oceans Campaigner, Greenpeace Africa: **French, English**

Aliou Ba, Political Advisor, Greenpeace Africa: **French, English**

Laura Meller, Global Campaign Lead, Greenpeace Nordics: **Finnish, English**



Contacts:

James Hanson, Global Media Lead - james.hanson@greenpeace.org / +44 7801 212 994

Greenpeace International Press Desk, pressdesk.int@greenpeace.org, +31 20 718 2470 (24 hours)