

Report on progress with the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement (BBNJ) –

Australia update

1. The *Agreement under the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction* (BBNJ Agreement) was formally adopted by UN member states on 19 June 2023, marking nearly two decades of negotiations and discussions.
2. It is the third implementing agreement to the [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea](#) (UNCLOS), alongside the [UN Fish Stocks Agreement](#) and the [Part XI Agreement](#).
3. The BBNJ Agreement addresses a package of issues under the overall objective of ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction for the present and in the long term, through effective implementation of the relevant provisions of UNCLOS and through furthering international cooperation and coordination.
4. It fills governance gaps in areas beyond national jurisdiction, addressing four main issues:
 - a. Marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits;
 - b. Measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas;
 - c. Environmental impact assessments; and
 - d. Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.
5. It also addresses several cross-cutting issues, establishes a funding mechanism and sets up institutional arrangements, including a Conference of the Parties and various subsidiary bodies, a Clearing-House Mechanism and a secretariat.
6. The Agreement is critical to addressing the threats facing the ocean, and to the success of ocean-related goals and targets, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) [14](#) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework global [target 3](#) to protect 30 per cent of the world's coastal and marine areas by 2030.

Signature and Ratification

7. Given the importance of the BBNJ Agreement to improving the health and resilience of the ocean, everyone stands to benefit from its implementation. The objectives of the Agreement will most effectively be achieved with universal participation.
8. The BBNJ Agreement is open for signature from 20 September 2023 to 20 September 2025 and will enter into force 120 days after the date of deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession. At that point, the Agreement will become binding on all those who have become parties, meaning that all of the rights and obligations thereunder will take effect.
9. As at 20 September 2024, 92 States have signed, and eight States have deposited an instrument of ratification.

Relationship with other bodies

10. The BBNJ Agreement will enhance coordination and cooperation across existing global, sectoral and regional regimes that have mandates in the high seas and international seabed, including regional fisheries management organisations (RFMO), the International Maritime Organization and the International Seabed Authority.
11. The BBNJ Agreement provides that it shall be interpreted and applied in a manner that does not undermine relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies (IFBs). It shall be interpreted and applied in a manner that promotes coherence and coordination with, and among, those IFBs.
12. The BBNJ Agreement also provides for States Parties to cooperate and promote its objectives when participating in decision making in other IFBs, for example when adopting measures to support the establishment of high seas marine protected areas.
13. IFBs, including RFMOs, will play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of the BBNJ Agreement through enhanced cooperation and collaboration and in improving coherence in efforts towards the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

BBNJ Preparatory Commission

14. On 24 April 2024, the UN General Assembly adopted [resolution 78/272](#), in which it decided to establish a Preparatory Commission (PrepComm) to prepare for the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement and to prepare for the convening of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement.
15. Representatives from Belize and Australia were elected as Co-Chairs of the PrepComm during its organizational meeting, and 15 Vice-Chairs were also elected, as follows: Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Germany, Latvia, Japan, Mauritius, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Sierra Leone, Singapore and South Africa.
16. The program of work for the PrepComm includes:
 - a. Governance issues, including rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties
 - b. Operation of the clearing house mechanism
 - c. Financial rules and financial resources and mechanisms.
17. PrepComm meetings are scheduled to take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14 to 25 April 2025 and 18 to 29 August 2025, and least one session will be held in 2026.