

Adoption of BBNJ – Statement - Belgium

Madam President,

Belgium aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

As we convene in this assembly, we stand at a critical juncture in the history of our planet. Our ocean, encompassing vast and interconnected ecosystems, plays a fundamental role in sustaining life on Earth. It is an irreplaceable source of immense biodiversity and a partner in our fight against climate change.

By successfully negotiating the text of the BBNJ Agreement, the international community recognizes the inherent value of our ocean and the urgent need to protect and preserve its delicate balance.

Today, we stand on the threshold of history, prepared to embrace a new chapter in our collective commitment to safeguard the world's ocean and marine life for generations to come. This long-awaited treaty represents a multilateralism at its best and concretizes our shared responsibility to protect the precious biodiversity that resides beyond national jurisdictions. As a Blue Leader, Belgium considers that the adoption of this treaty as a landmark achievement.

This treaty is a gamechanger to reach the objectives we've agreed to in the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework, not in the least the target to effectively conserve and manage 30% of the land and sea areas by 2030.

Belgium wishes to emphasize the strong institutional arrangement agreed in this Treaty, including a self-standing secretariat. Belgium would be honored to host the Secretariat, if this option represents the will of the States Parties.

We are looking forward to sign and ratify the BBNJ Agreement as soon as possible and urge others to do so too, to ensure a swift entry into force.

In celebrating the adoption of the BBNJ treaty, we must also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. Effective implementation, capacity-building, and enhanced cooperation will be crucial in translating the treaty's provisions into tangible actions on the ground, or in the water, if you will. It is incumbent upon us to strengthen our partnerships, exchange best practices, and provide the necessary support to enable all nations, regardless of their circumstances, to fulfill their obligations under the treaty.

Let us also recognize the invaluable contributions of scientists, experts, and civil society actors who have dedicated their knowledge, expertise, and passion to the cause of marine conservation.

And last but not least, Madam President, we would like to praise you today for your tireless dedication to achieve this process. Your leadership and perseverance have had a profound impact on the success of this treaty. Thank you, Madam President.