



## HIGH SEAS ALLIANCE APPLAUDS ADOPTION OF HIGH SEAS TREATY AND CALLS FOR SWIFT RATIFICATION

New York, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023: The High Seas Alliance applauded governments meeting at the United Nations in New York today for formally adopting the new High Seas Treaty to protect ocean life after running out of time in early March when the negotiations were finalised.

Individual countries will now have to ratify the Treaty through their own domestic legal processes. The sixtieth country to do so will start a hundred-and-twenty-day countdown, after which the global agreement will become international law.

“We praise countries for moving one step closer towards putting this political accord into action in the water by formally adopting this landmark Treaty today. Countries must now ratify it as quickly as possible to bring it into force so that we can protect our ocean, build our resilience to climate change and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of billions of people,” said Rebecca Hubbard, Director of the High Seas Alliance.

The High Seas Treaty provides the world’s first legal framework to protect the High Seas, the area of ocean that lies beyond countries’ national waters. These vast ocean areas cover half the planet, yet only 1% are currently protected.

Once it enters into force, the new Treaty will introduce consistent environmental impact assessments for human activities in these waters, ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources, build the capacity of countries to implement the agreement and provide a pathway to establish marine protected areas. It is a key tool to help deliver the target to protect at least 30% of land and sea by 2030 (30×30), agreed under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in December 2022 - the minimum level of protection scientists warn is necessary to ensure a healthy ocean.

“With this Treaty we have an historic chance to protect our ocean from the ever-increasing onslaughts of over-exploitation. It’s critical that it is ratified swiftly for the sake of all life on Earth,” concluded Hubbard.

### High Seas Alliance Member Quotes

**Chris Thorne of Greenpeace's Protect the Oceans campaign said:**

"This Treaty is a win for all life on this planet. Now those same governments which agreed it must urgently ratify and begin delivering vast ocean sanctuaries on the high seas. The science is clear, we must protect 30% of the oceans by 2030 to give the oceans a chance to recover and thrive.

"2030 looms large on the horizon, and the scale of our task is vast. Less than 1% of the high seas are protected. Millions of people from all over the world have demanded change and together we have achieved this historic agreement, but we still have a long way to go.

"We are committed to achieving 30x30. We will work day and night to ensure this Treaty is ratified in record time, and ocean sanctuaries free from destructive human activities covering 30% of the oceans become a reality by the end of this decade."

**Lisa Speer, Director of the International Oceans Program at the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC) said:**

"Today countries formally adopted what is a ground-breaking Treaty for ocean conservation on a global scale. We call on countries to swiftly ratify the Treaty and develop the robust institutional framework necessary to implement it. We also urge them to prepare the groundwork for the first set of fully and highly protected marine protected areas to be established under the new Treaty once it enters into force. There is no time to lose."

**Matthew Collis, Deputy Vice President for Policy at IFAW ([International Fund for Animal Welfare](#)) said:**

"For the whales, sharks and turtles that traverse the ocean, to the tiniest plankton on which all marine life depends, IFAW is delighted to see nations move closer to making this new Treaty and the protections it can offer a reality. Governments must now ratify the Treaty without delay."

**Nichola Clark, Officer, Ocean Governance, The Pew Charitable Trusts said:**

"Today's official adoption of the High Seas Treaty by the United Nations Member States represents an important step in the international community's efforts to protect 30% of our global ocean by 2030. To achieve this global target, we must protect waters beyond national jurisdiction. We urge world leaders to keep up the momentum from this landmark treaty and pave the way for the creation of the first generation of marine protected areas on the high seas."

**Flora McMorrin, Campaigns Director of RISE UP said:**

"RISE UP celebrates the formal adoption of the High Seas Treaty. Governments must now move swiftly to ratify it, to bring it into force and help safeguard the oceans, upon which our survival depends."

**Fabienne McLellan, Managing Director, OceanCare said:**

"With today's adoption of the BBNJ Agreement, governments have taken a significant step towards protecting the ocean, building resilience to climate change and proactively addressing and preventing transboundary pollution. It is now up to governments to seize this opportunity and to turn all their ocean-related commitments into action by signing and ratifying the Treaty as soon as

possible. This Treaty can be the game-changer the ocean and we all desperately need. The state of the ocean is dire, we simply cannot afford to fail.”

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** For further information please read the [High Seas Treaty factsheet](#).

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