



The International Business Alliance
for Corporate Ocean Responsibility

News Release

ASSESSING INDUSTRY RISK TO MARINE BIODIVERSITY

World Ocean Council Event at U.N. To Advance Science-based Threat and Risk Assessment for Determining Effects of Human Activity on Ocean Biodiversity

26 August 2019

The World Ocean Council (WOC) is organizing an official Side Event at the U.N. Headquarters on “Methods and Tools for Documenting Human Activity and Assessing Threat and Risk to High Seas Biodiversity”.

The event will take place on 28 August, during the current round of U.N. negotiations to expand the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to include a new legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The BBNJ seeks to address the effects of human activity on biodiversity, e.g. through environmental impact assessments and area-based management tools. In order for these to be targeted and effective, it will be beneficial to:

- Document the kinds of human activities actually taking place in specific high seas areas
- Determine whether these activities constitute a threat to biodiversity
- Identify whether these activities are actually a risk to organisms, populations, species or their habitat in specific locations

The WOC side event will examine the options and experience in documenting human activity in the marine environment and assessing the threat and risk to biodiversity from economic activity at sea based on science and evidence. A case study of methods developed and applied by BMT and the government in Australia will be reviewed, its lessons learned presented and the applicability to the high seas considered.

Greg Fisk, Environment Director from the global marine science and technology firm BMT, said, “With major changes to spatial planning and impact assessment proposed for the high seas, it is critical that future decision-making is underpinned by scientific evidence and that priority threats are identified and managed. This side event will present an emerging methodology from Australia for how threats and risks to marine biodiversity from offshore economic activities can be assessed in a comprehensive framework.”

The annual WOC Sustainable Ocean Summit (SOS), 20-22 November, Paris will again provide

the only regular briefing on the BBNJ Treaty specifically for the ocean business community.

A 2-page WOC briefing on the BBNJ and implications for ocean industries can be found [here](#). The [initial version of the new legally binding instrument](#) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) became available in June, as previously announced by the WOC.

The WOC is an accredited observer to the BBNJ negotiations and has been the only ocean industry organization consistently and actively involved in the BBNJ process over the past decade as this effort to develop the most important new legal regime for the ocean since the establishment of the U.N. Law of the Sea proceeds.

The WOC is working to develop the “BBNJ Business Coalition” for coordinated industry involvement in the BBNJ process. This will advance interaction both: a) among the sectors of the diverse ocean business community and b) between the private sector and other stakeholders. The Coalition will seek to develop coordinated industry input to ensure that the BBNJ will be practical, implementable and engender constructive ocean business community engagement in the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in international waters.

There is still time for ocean industries to engage and have a voice in this critical ocean governance process that will affect business access and operations in the high seas for the foreseeable future by participating in the WOC BBNJ Business Coalition.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Sustainable Ocean Summit (SOS) 2019: 20-22 Nov, Paris

“Investing in Ocean Futures: Finance and Innovation for the Blue Economy”

Early registration ends on **13 September 2019**. For information on the developing program and to register, visit <https://www.sustainableoceansummit.org/>.

Recent and Upcoming WOC Outreach and Engagement

19-30 August, NEW YORK

U.N. Law of the Sea, BBNJ Treaty - 3rd Negotiation Session on the international, legally binding instrument under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea re the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) (Industry Representative)

16-20 September, HONOLULU

OceanObs '19 (Participant)

18-19 September, SINGAPORE

Shipping 2030 and Global Liner Shipping Asia (Speaker)

World Ocean Council (WOC) – The Global Blue Economy Business Organization

The WOC is the international, cross-sectoral alliance for private sector leadership, collaboration and action on ocean sustainability, stewardship and science. Companies from a range of industries worldwide are distinguishing themselves as leaders in “Corporate Ocean Responsibility”, including: shipping, oil and gas, tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, mining, renewable energy, ocean technology and investment.

WOC Members are listed [here](#), a part of the WOC Network of 35,000+ ocean industry stakeholders around the world. The WOC is a registered not-for-profit organization in the US, UK and France.

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