



The International Business Alliance
for Corporate Ocean Responsibility

News Release

REVISED DRAFT OF PROPOSED NEW, LEGALLY BINDING U.N. LAW OF THE SEA REGULATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

Updated Version of the U.N. Law of the Sea “BBNJ” Agreement on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Available; WOC to Provide Review and Analysis for Ocean Business Community

28 November 2019

The revised text of the proposed legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) was posted on 27 November 2019 and is available at www.un.org/bbnj.

This version of the BBNJ text is critical, as there is only one more BBNJ negotiating session planned. The 4th and final formal negotiating session will take place at the U.N. HQ in New York in “the first half of 2020”. The World Ocean Council (WOC) will again be at the negotiating session to ensure industry involvement.

The WOC will be undertaking a detailed review and analysis of the updated draft BBNJ text for the global ocean business community as soon as possible. In the meantime, a 2-page WOC briefing on the BBNJ and implications for ocean industries can be found [here](#).

Earlier this month, the WOC CEO met with the head of the BBNJ negotiations, Ms Rena Lee of Singapore, at which time she reiterated the importance of industry engagement in the BBNJ process, as the WOC has been working to achieve. The recent WOC Sustainable Ocean Summit (SOS), Paris, 20-22 November 2019, included a briefing on the BBNJ situation for the ocean business community, as been the case for each SOS since 2015.

The SOS 2019 also included a session on “Ocean EIA”, building on the formal Side Event the WOC organized at the 3rd BBNJ Negotiating session. The WOC is working to develop an Ocean EIA working group to pull together marine EIA experience, case studies and best practices to help ensure the BBNJ treaty’s EIA requirements are practical, implementable and best able to achieve the goals of the treaty in partnership with the private sector.

The legally binding BBNJ will create new international high seas regulation on:

- **Environmental impact assessments (EIAs)**
- **Area-based management tools including marine protected areas (MPAs)**

- **Capacity-building and transfer of marine technology**
- **Marine genetic resources (MGRs) including benefit sharing**

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”. Industry involvement is critical and can help ensure that policies and regulations are developed with full and balanced information, are based on good science and risk assessment, are practical and implementable and engender the involvement and support of the ocean business community.

The WOC “BBNJ Business Coalition” provides a means 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.

The WOC “BBNJ Business Coalition” participants (as well as WOC Members) will receive expert review and analysis of the BBNJ process, covering the negotiation progress and dynamics, the priority BBNJ issues, concerns and input of governments and other stakeholders, and the evolving content of the draft new legally binding agreement.

The WOC CEO has been participating in the BBNJ process since it began over a decade ago to ensure that the ocean business community is present and engaged in this effort to develop the most important new legal regime for the ocean since the establishment of the U.N. Law of the Sea in the 1970s.

In preparation for the start of the formal BBNJ Negotiations, in 2018 the WOC released a report on [“Ocean Governance and the Private Sector”](#) – a review of major international ocean policy organizations and processes, the past and ongoing efforts for engaging the business community and priorities for the future, especially for the WOC in its role as the global, multi-industry organization on ocean sustainable development.

Recent and Upcoming WOC Outreach and Engagement

29 November, PARIS
Climate Finance Day 2019 (Participant)

2-13 December, MADRID
U.N. Climate Change Convention – Conference of the Parties (COP) 25 (Participant)

4-5 December, HAMBURG
Arctic Shipping Summit (Speaker)

8-9 December, MADRID
World Climate Summit (Session Chair; Institutional Partner)

10 December, PARIS

GEF Marine Plastics Final Project Meeting (Participant)

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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