



The International Business Alliance
for Corporate Ocean Responsibility

News Release

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP IN THE HIGH SEAS: MOVING FROM U.N. POLICY AND PRINCIPLES TO BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AND PRACTICES

WOC to Organize First-ever High-level Ocean Business Panel on the High Seas Treaty during Final Negotiations for Binding Agreement on International Waters at U.N. HQ

5 March 2020

The World Ocean Council (WOC) is organizing an official panel event at the U.N. HQ on “*The Role of the Private Sector in BBNJ Implementation: Moving from UN Policy and Principles to Business Performance and Practices*”.

The high-level industry panel will take place on the opening day of the final round of negotiations (23 March-3 April) on the new legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine life in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The WOC continues to work to keep the global ocean business community informed and engaged in the U.N. negotiations to expand the Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to include the new BBNJ legally binding instrument.

The panel on 23 March will bring together CEOs and senior executives of companies or industry associations from shipping, cruise tourism, fishing, seabed mining, geophysical survey, marine genetic resources. These industry leaders will be able to engage directly with the government BBNJ negotiators, and the representatives of other stakeholders attending the negotiations, regarding the interest, commitment and experience of business in addressing biodiversity challenges.

This event builds on the WOC side event at the BBNJ negotiations in August 2019 on “Methods and Tools for Documenting Human Activity and Assessing Threat and Risk to High Seas Biodiversity”, as the WOC continues to work with leadership companies on practical efforts to advance industry efforts on sustainable development and biodiversity conservation.

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.

A 2-page WOC briefing on the BBNJ and implications for ocean industries can be found [here](#).

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

The current BBNJ draft text is available at www.un.org/bbnj. The WOC has undertaken an expert review and analysis of the BBNJ which is available to WOC Members.

Avoiding, reducing or mitigating the effects of private sector activity on biodiversity in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction depends on the actual performance of companies and the practices they employ. A constructive dialogue between the private sector and other stakeholders is essential to the implementation of the BBNJ.

The WOC CEO, Paul Holthus, will be providing a special briefing on the BBNJ to shipping industry leaders in early April at the CMA Shipping Conference, the largest international shipping event in North America.

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. 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.

Recent and Upcoming WOC Outreach and Engagement

11-12 March, COPENHAGEN

Green Ship Technology (GST) Europe 2020 (Supporting Organization)

17-19 March, ANTWERP

IAPH World Ports Conference 2020 (Supporting Organization)

24-25 March, HAMBURG

3rd Green Maritime Forum (Partner)

23 March-3 April, NEW YORK

U.N. Law of the Sea, BBNJ Treaty – 4th (Final) 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)

31 March-2 April, STAMFORD, USA

CMA Shipping 2020 (Plenary Speaker on Law of the Sea/BBNJ Treaty)

21 April, BRUSSELS

4th Meeting of the EU Marine Knowledge Expert Group (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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