

High Seas Treaty

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Context

The **Blue Leaders High-Level Event on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction** was recently held in Belgium.

About

- **Objective:** The event was held to urge nations to ratify a new treaty to guard the excessive seas from pollutants, climate change and overfishing.
- **The Blue Leaders High-Level Event on BBNJ:** It is determined to apply the **United Nations Ocean Conference** to be held in 2025 as a platform to bring the BBNJ Treaty into force.
- **Participating nations:** Belgium, Cape Verde, Greece, Monaco, Nigeria, Norway and the UK participated in the event.
- **India's position :** India is yet to sign the treaty. However, it called on efforts for entry into force and implementation of the treaty G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration held in September 2023.

Biological Diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty

- It is an agreement under the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea** at the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of regions beyond national jurisdiction also known as the **"Treaty of the High Seas"**.
- **Adoption:** The agreement was followed through consensus at the 5th BBNJ

Intergovernmental Conference in New York on 19 June 2023

- **Secretariat BBNJ:** Brussels.
- **Signatories:** At present 88 countries are signatories to the treaty with two nations i.e. Chile and Palau have ratified it.
- The BBNJ treaty will “enter into pressure” while at least 60 nations ratify it.
- The agreement could be closed for signature on September 20, 2025. This approach nations have given their consent to be sure to it and after the closing date, countries can not signal however nonetheless can accede to the treaty, which has the same legal status as ratification.
- **Provisions of the treaty:**
 - **Establish Marine Protected areas in High seas:** To obtain the goal of effective conservation of 30% of land and sea through 2030, agreed within the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**.
 - **Benefits sharing of marine genetic resources:** The treaty guarantees that earnings from marine genetic assets (MGR) i.e. Substances of plant, animal or microbes are shared equitably and fairly.
 - **Rules for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):** It is to identify and examine the capacity influences of sure pastime may want to have on the sea For example, Carbon sequestration or deep-sea mining will now need to do EIAs.
 - Foresees ability building and the transfer of marine generation between the Parties

High seas

- The high seas are areas beyond 200 nautical miles from the exclusive economic zones of coastal countries as defined in the 1958 Geneva Convention
- **Common Good:** They lie beyond the jurisdiction of any one state and no state of America is liable for dealing with or defending its assets.
- **Extent:** The excessive seas incorporate 64 percent of the sea floor, and about 43 percent of the Earth.
- **Protection repute:** Despite covering more than two-thirds of the global ocean, only 1.44 percent of the high seas are protected.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- **Adoption:** It got here into force in 1982.
 - It lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's oceans and seas establishing policies governing all uses of the oceans and their sources.
- **Role:**
 - It defines the rights and obligations of countries in the oceans, the extent of ocean regions over which countries could declare sovereignty, and the legal status of marine assets.
 - It also specified a fixed standard of regulations for quite a number of activities in the oceans which includes navigation, medical research, and deep-sea mining.

Source: Down to Earth

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. What are the key provisions and implications of the United Nations High Seas Treaty? Discuss how Biological Diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty can be helpful in protecting marine biological diversity.