

# 20 YEARS later, signing of an Ocean Treaty: "Historic" for Greenpeace



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A landmark ocean treaty has finally been adopted by the United Nations after almost two decades of negotiations and intense civil society mobilization. The text will now go through a technical revision and translation, before being formally adopted at another session. This treaty is a huge victory for ocean protection, and shows that multilateralism still has its place in an increasingly divided world. The adoption of this treaty reaffirms the commitment to achieve **30×30 Goal** : **convert or protect 30% of the world's oceans by 2030**. It paves the way for the creation of fully or highly protected marine areas in all the world's oceans. However, there were gaps in the text, and governments must ensure that the treaty was put into practice effectively and fairly.

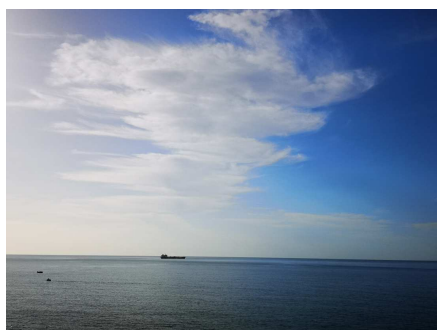
*"This is a historic day for ocean conservation and a sign that in a divided world, the protection of nature and people can triumph over geopolitics,"* said Laura Meller, oceans campaigner for Greenpeace Nordic, from New York. *"We commend countries for seeking compromises, putting aside differences, and crafting a treaty that will allow us to protect oceans, build resilience to climate change, and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of billions of people."* *"We can finally move from words to deeds. Countries must formally adopt and ratify the treaty as soon as possible for it to enter into force, and then establish the fully protected marine reserves our planet needs. Now is the time for action to achieve the 30×30 goal. Time is running out and we cannot rest on our laurels."*

The **High Ambition Coalition** (which includes the European Union, the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as China) played a key role in negotiating the agreement. It showed a willingness to compromise in the final days of negotiations and built alliances instead of sowing division. Small island States have shown leadership throughout the process. The **G77** Group has led the way in ensuring that the treaty can be put into practice in a fair and equitable manner.

The equitable sharing of monetary benefits from marine GRs was a major sticking point. This point was only resolved on the last day of negotiations. The marine protected areas section of the treaty puts an end to decision-making by consensus, which has proven its limits in protecting the oceans through existing regional bodies, as in the case of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. While the text still contains major problems, it is a viable treaty that is a starting point for the protection of 30% of the world's oceans. *"As an activist, seeing the culmination of such a long struggle is rare and valuable. But the fight does not stop, we know that we must continue to defend the oceans against the greed of industries and states,"* says François Chartier, Oceans Campaigner for Greenpeace France. *"Too much room is still left for activities as destructive as deep-sea mining, whose impacts would go far beyond the limits of mining areas."* *"This is why a [ban or moratorium on deep-sea mining](#) is essential to the Global Ocean Treaty, and the ISA meeting next March is a crucial step [1]."*

The **30×30 Goal**, agreed at COP15 on biodiversity, would not be achievable without this landmark treaty. The hard work of ratifying the treaty and protecting the oceans begins now. It is essential that countries urgently ratify this treaty and start working towards the creation of vast fully protected marine sanctuaries covering 30% of the oceans by 2030. Protecting the oceans is essential not only for the environment but also for the people who depend on the oceans for survival.

The current management system is deeply uneven and unfair, and allows a handful of nations to exploit ocean resources on the high seas without sharing much of the benefits with neighboring coastal communities. Small island States in the Pacific Ocean, whose coastal populations depend heavily on healthy marine ecosystems for food, livelihoods and jobs, are the most affected by the destruction of the oceans.



## Notes to editors

[1] The next meeting of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) will take place in Kingston from 16 to 31 March.

[2] Last week, Jane Fonda handed [over 5.5 million signatures](#) from 157 countries demanding a global ocean treaty to Rena Lee, chair of the UN negotiations.