

United Nations Member States Agree to Protect Marine Biodiversity

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Biodiversity (Noun) /ˌbaɪəʊdaɪˈvɜːrsəti/ the different types of plant and animal life in the world or an area
Example: There are newly discovered islands that are gaining popularity because of their biodiversity.
2. Framework (Noun) /ˈfreɪmˌwɜːk/ a set of ideas, beliefs, etc. on which a process, system, etc. is based
Example: They are studying the framework of the project and are trying to figure out any possible errors that might happen.
3. Pledge (Noun) /plɛdʒ/ a serious promise to do something
Example: The new mayor of the city made a pledge to fulfill all the duties and responsibilities of a city official.
4. Migration (Noun) /maɪˈɡreɪʃən/ the movement of a large number of animals from one place to another at a particular time of year
Example: Bird migration is a regular seasonal movement worth observing.
5. Livelihood (Noun) /ˈlaɪvliːhʊd/ a way of earning money to pay for housing, food, etc.
Example: The inmates are under a program wherein they can create arts and crafts that can help support the livelihood of their families.
6. Adopt (Verb) /əˈdɔːpt/ to choose to accept, use, follow, etc. something
Example: Many companies have seen an increase in productivity after adopting a four-day workweek.



For the first time, United Nations member states have agreed on a treaty to protect **biodiversity** in the high seas. A **framework** to protect marine life in the high seas — regions of the ocean outside national borders — had been in discussion for more than 20 years. The new treaty, which covers nearly half the planet's surface, was agreed to on March 4 in New York.

The treaty will create a new body to manage conservation of ocean life and establish marine protected areas in the high seas. That will be critical to achieve the UN Biodiversity Conference's recent **pledge** to protect 30% of the planet's waters and land. The treaty also establishes rules for assessing the environmental impact of commercial activities in the oceans.

The high seas have long suffered from commercial fishing and mining, as well as pollution from chemicals and plastics. Several marine species — including dolphins, whales, sea turtles and many fish — make long annual **migrations**, crossing national borders and the high seas. Efforts to protect them, along with human communities that rely on fishing or tourism connected to marine life, have long been difficult for international authorities.

According to Jessica Battle, an expert at the Worldwide Fund for Nature, the new treaty will bring together different regional treaties to protect species across their ranges. Gladys Martínez de Lemos, of the Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense, said, "Governments have taken an important step that strengthens the legal protection of two-thirds of the ocean and with it marine biodiversity and the **livelihoods** of coastal communities."

The question now is how well the ambitious treaty will be implemented. Countries will also need to formally **adopt** the treaty, and conservation and environmental groups say they will be watching closely.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on the UN High Seas Treaty?
2. What do you make of the UN Biodiversity Conference's recent pledge to protect 30% of the planet's waters and land?
3. Would you say that your country's conservation goals are ambitious enough?
4. What are the most well known environmental groups in your country?
5. What would you say is the biggest environmental problem in your country?