

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**STATEMENT AT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
CONFERENCE ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY  
BINDING INSTRUMENT UNDER THE UNITED  
NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA  
ON THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE  
OF MARINE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS  
BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION**

**by Mr. António Guterres**

**Secretary-General of the United Nations**

**[delivered by Miguel de Serpa Soares, United Nations Legal Counsel]**

**New York, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

Our ocean has been under pressure for decades. We can no longer ignore the ocean emergency.

The impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are being keenly felt around the globe, affecting our environment, our livelihoods and our lives.

In adopting a robust and ambitious agreement at this meeting, you can take an important step forward in countering these destructive trends and advancing ocean health for generations to come.

This treaty can ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of over two-thirds of our life-sustaining ocean space.

It can help guarantee that marine genetic resources are accessed and utilized for the benefit of all humanity.

It can provide an adequate framework for the use of marine protected areas to conserve and sustainably manage vital habitats and species.

It can make sure that the environmental impacts of activities are assessed and fully considered in decision-making.

And it can fulfil the promise of capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, levelling the playing field so all States can responsibly utilize and benefit from this critical global commons.

At the dawn of the fifth decade since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, you have the opportunity to further build on its legacy.

You can show that the Convention can adapt to meet evolving challenges – and demonstrate the continuing strength and promise of multilateralism.

With flexibility and perseverance, you can secure an outcome to help ensure our ocean will be healthier, more resilient and more productive, benefiting our planet and humankind.