

Germany Among the First Countries to Sign the BBNJ Agreement

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The Agreement 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 (BBNJ Agreement) was formally adopted by an intergovernmental conference convened by the UN General Assembly in New York on 19 June 2023.

Germany was determined to be one of the first States to sign the BBNJ Agreement. On 13 September 2023, the Federal Government approved the signing of the Agreement. After the weekly cabinet meeting, the Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection stated with regard to the Agreement:

There will be areas where indiscriminate fishing is no longer allowed.
There will be areas where deep-sea mining cannot take place and where protected areas for the marine environment can be established.

On 20 September 2023, the BBNJ Agreement was signed by Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock at the UN headquarters in New York in the presence of the Federal Minister of the Environment, the Federal Government Commissioner for the Ocean and the UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs.



Germany in the United Nations@GermanyUN, <https://twitter.com/GermanyUN/status/1704633553928032317>

Germany was one of the 68 States that signed the agreement on the first day of its opening for signature. After signing the agreement, Foreign Minister Baerbock stated:

Until now, the high seas were de facto a legal vacuum in the environmental sense, even though the high seas make up 2/3 of the oceans. Especially with a view to protecting biodiversity, we were unable to work together to protect our high seas due to this regulatory gap. That is now changing with this agreement.

Germany is committed to swift ratification of the agreement. Even before the BBNJ Agreement had been formally adopted the Federal Government wrote in its National Security Strategy, which was unveiled on 14 June 2023: 'The Federal Government will soon ratify the High Seas Treaty of the United Nations.'

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