



China Newsletter

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- Special Edition -

China and its Commitment to the BBNJ Agreement



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I.

Wang Yi Delivers Remarks at the Third Session of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the BBNJ Agreement and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement

On March 25, 2026, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivered remarks to the Third Session of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the BBNJ Agreement and the Convening of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement via video link.

Wang Yi stated that the adoption and entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement marks a victory of multilateralism and an important milestone in global marine governance. Its full and effective implementation is of vital importance matters to the well-being of all humanity. China is a steadfast supporter, defender and builder of the United Nations. In this fluid and turbulent world, China remains firm in upholding the central role of the U.N. and a strong pillar in defending multilateralism.

Wang Yi noted that China has a long and rich marine civilization. More than 600 years ago, Zheng He, the Chinese navigator, led seven voyages to the Western Seas, using the ocean as a bridge to build friendly ties with countries along the route. Today, China is committed to advancing a modernization characterized by harmony between humanity and nature, attaching equal importance to marine conservation and sustainable utilization of the oceans, and working to build a community of all life on Earth. China has is both willing and able to make new contributions to global marine governance. China's bid to host the Secretariat of the Agreement in Xiamen reflects the sense of responsibility of a major

developing country. China stands ready to work with all parties to promote the full and effective implementation of the Agreement and jointly build a more just and equitable global marine governance.

(https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbzhd/202603/t20260327_11882177.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

II. Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu Signs Marine Biodiversity Agreement on Behalf of China

On September 20, 2023 local time, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu, on behalf of the Chinese government, signed 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” at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The Agreement includes the access to and sharing of marine genetic resources, establishment of marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, capacity building and transfer of marine technology, among others, aiming to further establish rules and regulations for global ocean governance. The negotiations for the Agreement began in 2004 and it was finally concluded in June 2023, spanning nearly 20 years.

China actively participated in the negotiation process of the Agreement under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization, playing a constructive role in the finalization of the Agreement. By signing this important legal document on the first day of the opening for signatures of the Agreement, China once again demonstrates its strong commitment to the protection and sustainable use of the oceans and its dedication to upholding and safeguarding true multilateralism.

(https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zygy/hd/202406/t20240603_11375271.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

III. China's bid for BBNJ Secretariat

Welcome Message



Wang Yi
Minister of Foreign Affairs
The People's Republic of China

Oceans are the common home of humanity. Promoting the sustainable development of oceans is a lofty mission of the international community. I extend my congratulations on the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement on January 17, 2026, which is a triumph of multilateralism marking a new chapter in global ocean governance.

The BBNJ Agreement is a milestone international treaty under the auspices of the United Nations. Its effective implementation is vital to the well-being of all humanity. To better fulfill the commitments and mission of the Agreement, and uphold the fundamental interests of the international community, we need a Secretariat commensurate with its significance and promising future. We believe that Xiamen, China is the best and most ideal choice for the Secretariat.

China has all along championed true multilateralism, firmly defended the UN-centered international system and the

international order based on international law, and worked with all parties to build a community with a shared future for humanity. China has attached great importance to the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, and has been deeply involved in global ocean governance. Building on this, China is ready and able to make still greater contributions to the BBNJ Agreement.

Known as a garden city on the sea, Xiamen is a beautiful and livable city with a long history situated on China's southeast coast. For millennia, it has been a key link of the Maritime Silk Road, and nurtured an open and inclusive maritime culture. Today's Xiamen, with its world-renowned innovation environment, flourishing blue economy and pleasant living conditions, is a pivotal hub for international maritime cooperation. Its unrelenting pursuit of sustainable marine development is fully consistent with the objectives of the BBNJ Agreement.

To ensure the Secretariat's immediate operational readiness, Xiamen has prepared a state-of-the-art and modern office building at a premium location and reserved space to meet its future needs. In addition, the Chinese Government promises to offer all-round preferential treatment and support for the operation of the Secretariat and the parties' involvement in BBNJ-related work.

We look forward to hosting the BBNJ Secretariat in Xiamen.

Give China this opportunity, together we will create a legend for the world.

(<https://english.bbnjxiamen.cn/welcomemessage.html>)



Vision

The Secretariat is not only the administrative hub for the operation of the Agreement, but also a platform for facilitating universal participation and deepening practical cooperation. Guided by multilateralism, the Secretariat should adhere to objectivity and neutrality, and pursue high ambitions and take concrete actions, so as to better realize the Agreement's objectives and enhance the common well-being of all humanity.

Dialogue--Supporting Equal and Inclusive Dialogues

- Promote the equal participation of all Parties in the Agreement, especially developing States Parties, and jointly explore optimal approaches to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity
- Ensure participation of stakeholders and observers in line with the Agreement
- Assist decision making based on solid science, respecting diverse knowledge systems and incorporating traditional knowledge

Sharing--Promoting Information Dissemination and Sharing

- Manage the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) to meet the needs of all parties, and facilitate their access to and use of the mechanism, giving full recognition to the special requirements of developing States Parties and the special circumstances of small island developing States Parties
- Leverage the CHM to promote knowledge dissemination and sharing, and to provide links to existing data and knowledge resources, so as to deepen understanding of the ocean and assist

Parties in making sound decisions

- Through the well-functioning of the CHM, support the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of marine genetic resources, facilitate capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, and promote science-based decision making for marine protection, so as to ensure that the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity better benefit all humanity

Collaboration--Building Interactive Platforms

- Function in a Party-driven, efficient, cost-effective, green and accountable manner, and evolve to meet the growing needs of the Agreement

- Cooperate and coordinate with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies

- Take measures as authorized to assist Parties in cooperating and communicating with other States, among relevant legal instruments, frameworks and bodies with the aim to forging consensus and synergy

(<https://english.bbnjxiamen.cn/vision.html>)



Why China

- A Staunch Supporter of Multilateralism
- A Dynamic Practitioner of Human-Ocean Harmony
- A Major Contributor to Marine Scientific Research
- An Active Builder of Blue Partnerships
- A Strong Promoter of the BBNJ Agreement



China firmly upholds the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order based on international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China will work with other countries to advocate the common values of humanity, safeguard the common well-being of humanity, and build a community with a shared future for humanity.

Committed to true multilateralism, China supports the building of a more just and equitable global governance system. It is a member of almost all universal intergovernmental organizations and a party to over 600 international conventions and their amendments. China has been among the first countries to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and has

taken the lead in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in good faith, China supports the International Seabed Authority, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf – all established pursuant to the Convention – to discharge their duties according to law. China is a Category A Council Member of the International Maritime Organization. It takes an active part in the work of regional fisheries management organizations.

As the Presidency of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, China facilitated the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It ensures that at least 30 percent of areas of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas be effectively conserved and managed by 2030. China initiated the establishment of the Kunming Biodiversity Fund as a cornerstone investor, making unique contribution to the conservation of biodiversity across the globe.

(https://english.bbnjxiamen.cn/2026-02/13/c_1161127.htm)



Why Xiamen

The name Xiamen (厦 门) comes from two Chinese characters rich in symbolic meaning as reflected in a poem:

厦 “Xià”: A grand mansion shelters guests from five continents;

门 “Mén”: A broad gateway embraces waves of ten thousand miles.

Along the Pacific Rim, Xiamen is located on the southeast coast of China. Celebrated as a garden city on the sea, this dazzling pearl has long been a nexus on the ancient Maritime Silk Road. This city of Human-Ocean Harmony spans 1,699 square kilometers and features a scenic coastline that runs for 265 kilometers.

As one of China’s earliest Special Economic Zones, Xiamen is a buzzing hub of international trade and a vibrant melting pot of cultures. Blessed with abundant sunshine, mild year-round weather and effortless livability, the city weaves green vigor, local heritage with international vibes.

(https://english.bbnjxiamen.cn/2026-03/10/c_1166799.htm)



Our Offer

To ensure the rapid set-up and swift functioning of the Secretariat, China is committed to providing the Secretariat with a fully equipped, sufficiently sized office space that not only meets current needs but also allows ample room for future expansion, as well as supporting its day-to-day operations. China will also offer a full range of preferential treatments and facilitation measures, designed to ensure an agreeable environment for the Secretariat staff and delegates to work and live in Xiamen.

Financial Contributions

China will contribute to the voluntary trust fund established by the BBNJ Agreement, to facilitate the participation of representatives of developing States Parties, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in the meetings of the bodies under the Agreement

China will contribute to the special fund established by the BBNJ Agreement to support capacity-building and other related activities of relevant countries

Visa and Entry Facilitation

Diplomatic passport holders from 160 countries, service passport holders from 139 countries and ordinary passport holders from 77 countries are exempted from visa application

Building on its existing visa privilege policies, China will further provide convenient visa services free of charge for officials of the Secretariat and their family members, as well as representatives of the Parties coming to China for meetings

24-hour fast-track services will be available at international airports to facilitate the entry, exit and domestic transfers of Secretariat officials, their family members and delegates attending meetings in China

The *One-Stop Service Center for Overseas Guests* at Xiamen Airport offers multilingual services, providing convenient first-stop services covering customs clearance, communication, culture and tourism

Privileges and Immunities

China will conclude a headquarters agreement with the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement at the earliest possible date, ensuring that the Secretariat enjoy legal capacity in the territory of China and be granted such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the exercise of its functions; and ensuring the broad and equal participation of all parties in the work of the BBNJ Agreement. These treatments may be applied to:

- The Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, its officials and their spouses and minor children*
- Members of the subsidiary bodies of the BBNJ Agreement*
- The Parties, observers and other accredited personnel participating in meetings related to the BBNJ Agreement*

Sound Public Security

China is one of the safest countries in the world, and Xiamen is one of the safest cities in China. Xiamen provides high-standard and professional security measures for hosting international conferences and large-scale events.

**According to the Global Safety Report 2025 released by Gallup, China ranked third globally in the list of Where People Felt the Most Safe in 2024 and fourth in the Law and Order Index.*

Thoughtful Exclusive Services

China will assign a professional team to provide one-stop services for Secretariat officials and their family members, covering accommodation, employment, medical care and school enrollment for their children.

High-Quality Medical Care

Xiamen boasts first-class medical resources in China, with multiple hospitals in the vicinity of the Secretariat, offering high-end medical services aligned with international standards.

Abundant Educational Resources

Xiamen offers a comprehensive education system for international students covering preschool education, basic education and higher education. More than 200 schools are eligible to enroll international students, and many international schools offer IB programs and AP courses, which are effectively connected with the international education system.

(https://english.bbnjxiamen.cn/2026-02/13/c_1161228.htm)



IV.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Guo Jiakun's Regular Press Conference on January 20, 2026

Xinhua News Service: The Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) entered into force on January 17. China and other 81 countries as well as the EU have become parties to the BBNJ agreement. Can I have your comment on that? According to reports, the Permanent Representative of China to the UN wrote in a letter to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on January 16 that China has decided to present its candidature of the city of Xiamen to host the Secretariat of the treaty. Commentators say that the bid underscores Beijing's desire to have greater influence over global environmental governance. Can you share more details and China's consideration?

Guo Jiakun: As the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction enters into effect, the milestone international treaty under the UN framework opens a new chapter of global marine governance and marks the success of multilateralism. China is one of the first countries to sign the agreement and one of the first party states to the agreement. We welcome and extend congratulations on the entry into force of the agreement.

China always upholds true multilateralism and supports the UN-centered international system. China attaches high importance to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans. As a responsible major country, China is deeply involved in global marine governance, and is willing and capable of making even greater and positive contribution to the implementation of the BBNJ agreement. With the aim of realizing the purpose and objective of the agreement and safeguarding the overall interest of the international community, China has proposed to host the Secretariat of the agreement in Xiamen and presented the decision to the UN Secretary-General on January 16.

Xiamen, known as the “Garden on the Sea,” is a beautiful and liveable city that boasts time-honored history and openness and inclusiveness. The city’s favorable environment for innovation and the booming blue economy are recognized worldwide and have made Xiamen an important hub in international marine cooperation. The city’s relentless effort for sustainable marine development dovetails with the purpose and objective of the BBNJ agreement. China stands ready to provide the best working environment for the Secretariat and help better realize the purpose and objective of the agreement. We are confident that Xiamen is the most ideal host city of the Secretariat of the agreement.

China stands ready to step up communication and cooperation with all parties, jointly support the full, accurate and effective implementation of the BBNJ agreement, and make greater contribution to advancing global marine governance and upholding international maritime order.

(https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202601/t20260120_11817009.html)

V.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning's Regular Press Conference on April 10, 2026

The Paper: 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) entered into force in January this year. China has applied to host the secretariat in Xiamen. As the United States has yet to ratify the agreement and is cutting support to the UN budget, some media see this as China taking advantage of the situation to expand its influence in ocean governance. How do you respond to this?

Mao Ning: What lies at the heart of multilateralism is the approach of seeking solutions through consultations by all stakeholders, confronting challenges together and sharing opportunities and prosperity, rather than a zero-sum game mentality. The conclusion and entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement is a triumph of multilateralism and a significant milestone in global ocean governance. The full and effective implementation of the agreement bears on the common wellbeing of humanity. China, committed to true multilateralism, attaches high importance to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and stands ready to make new contributions to global ocean governance.

(https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/202604/t20260410_11890053.html)

VI.
Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas
beyond National Jurisdiction
BBNJ Agreement

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 adopted on 19 June 2023 by the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction convened under the auspices of the United Nations, and entered into force on 17 January 2026. The BBNJ Agreement becomes the third implementing agreement to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Under the overall objective of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, for the present and in the long-term, through effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the Convention and further international cooperation and coordination, the Agreement addresses four main issues:

- Marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits;
- Measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas;
- Environmental impact assessments; and
- Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

The Agreement also addresses a number of “cross-cutting issues”, establishes a funding mechanism and sets up institutional arrangements, including a Conference of the Parties and various subsidiary bodies, a Clearing-House Mechanism and a secretariat.

The Agreement was open for signature by all States and regional economic integration organizations from 20 September 2023 to 20 September 2025, and entered into force on 17 January 2026 (Depositary notification C.N.447.2025.TREATIES-XXI.10). As of 21 September 2025, any State or regional economic integration organization that has not signed the Agreement by the date it was closed for signature may accede to it.

Status of 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(https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXI-10&chapter=21&clang=_en)

(<https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/en>)