2022 Ocean Sciences Meeting Town Hall
Opportunities for engagement between High Seas Treaty negotiators and the broader scientific community

Sponsored by

The Girguis Lab at Harvard University
The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO)
International Council of Environmental Law

February 25, 2022
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm (Eastern Time)

CONCEPT

Countries are currently negotiating a comprehensive global binding treaty to better protect biodiversity in the high seas (High Seas Treaty) at the United Nations. Developing a governance framework for Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs) of the high seas is a crucial element of the proposed treaty. Negotiating countries' positions on MGRs of the high seas, including questions on the sharing of benefits, range from no regulation to an elaborate infrastructure for access and benefit sharing of all the MGRs of the high seas. For the scientists who may be involved with MGRs of the high seas and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities that may hold relevant traditional knowledge, the outcome of the High Seas Treaty could impact their day-to-day work or their rights. Strong engagement with key stakeholders, such as scientists from both the academic and private sector as well as traditional knowledge holders will likely increase the odds that any new governance framework will not only be practical and remain relevant in decades to come but also, provide a platform that will foster research, collaboration, and marine conservation. The consultations are designed to contribute to the on-going negotiations.

PROGRAM

In collaboration with ASLO and the International Council of Environmental Law, The Girguis Lab at Harvard University, with the support of The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, is hosting a virtual Town Hall Meeting at the 2022 Ocean Sciences Meeting with United Nations Member State delegates that aims at providing:

1. scientists from the broad scientific community with an overview of the negotiations to date and possible ramifications for research activities on the high seas, as well as the use of high seas MGRs in research and development,
2. scientists with a venue to ask questions of the Member State delegates, and
3. opportunities for further engagement.

The scientific community can provide valuable input so that the Treaty will be based on best available science and not be at odds with the very goals of the Treaty: to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of the high seas. There is a significant momentum to complete the negotiations as soon as possible, considering the unprecedented rate of degradation of the ocean ecosystems. This workshop is an opportunity for you to become engaged in the most important international treaty negotiations for fostering scientific research and development as well as for developing new ideas on ocean governance policy, international relations, and international law.

The Girguis Lab will also introduce the new website on marine genetic resources.

PROGRAM
25 February 2022 (3:00 – 4:30 pm Eastern Time)

3:00 – 3:10 pm	**Welcome**
	
	Speakers:
	    Peter R Girguis, Harvard University
	    Roxane Maranger, President, Association on the Study of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO)

3:10 – 3:25 pm	**Introduction: Importance of stakeholder engagement—why does your input matter?** *Speaker*: *Janine Coye-Felson, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute*
3:25 – 3:40 pm	**Perspectives of developing countries and potential implications for scientific research: Focus on the Caribbean Community** *Speaker: Juliette Babb-Riley, Charge d'Affaires, Barbados High Commission to Ghana*
3:40 – 3:55 pm	**Perspectives of developed countries and potential implications for scientific research: Focus on the European Union** *Speaker: Anca LeRoy, Government of France*
3:55 – 4:20 pm	**Q & A and Dialogue** *Moderator: Hiroko Muraki Gottlieb, International Council of Environmental Law*
4:20 – 4:30 pm	**Introduction of the MGR Website** *Speaker: Peter R. Girguis, Harvard University*