



Side Event at The Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

**From landlocked to areas beyond national jurisdiction:
Opportunities for LLDCs from the BBNJ Agreement**

**Organized by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the
Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations (UN-OLA/DOALOS)**

7 August 2025, 13:15 – 14:45

Side Event Room 8, Awaza Conference Center

Background

The *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* provides an essential legal framework for the access of landlocked countries to and from the sea and for the freedom of transit. This framework is of particular importance for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) which seek to explore the opportunities of the ocean and its resources for unlocking their development potentials, despite their lack of direct territorial access to the sea.

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), adopted on 19 June 2023 and opened for signature on 20 September 2025, offers new opportunities. Acknowledging the special interests and needs of LLDCs, the BBNJ Agreement provides LLDCs with opportunities to benefit from and contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. The timely and effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement can make vital contributions to addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, as well as to achieving ocean-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. As of July 2025, 138 States, including 13 LLDCs, and the European Union have signed the BBNJ Agreement, with 52 signatories, including one LLDC, having also ratified it.

Objectives of the side event

This side event aims to promote a better understanding of the BBNJ Agreement, focusing on how LLDCs can engage with and benefit from the BBNJ Agreement, as well as on how LLDCs can support its swift entry into force and effective implementation. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss and identify challenges and opportunities for LLDCs in becoming parties to and implementing the BBNJ Agreement, including their capacity-building needs and priorities as well as possible opportunities and partnerships to respond to such needs and priorities.

Programme

1. **Opening** (5 mins)
2. **Overview of the BBNJ Agreement and activities to promote a better understanding and prepare for its entry into force** (15 mins)
 - **Bingzhuo Li**, Legal Officer, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations
3. **LLDCs and the BBNJ Agreement: Challenges and opportunities for LLDCs in becoming parties to and implementing the BBNJ Agreement** (65 mins)

Speakers

- **Olivier Maes**, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations
- **Davit Grigoryan**, Head of the Division of Multilateral Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia
- **Franz Zubieta Mariscal**, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations
- **Tieho Rankhone**, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Lesotho to the United Nations
- **Mwila Daka**, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations
- **Andrew Hume**, International Waters Focal Area Coordinator, Global Environment Facility (video presentation)

Moderated discussions and Q&A

4. **Concluding Remarks** (5 mins)

Guiding Questions for discussions

- How can the BBNJ Agreement contribute to unlocking the potentials of LLDCs?
- How can LLDCs contribute to the swift entry into force and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement?
- What are the capacity-building needs and priorities for LLDCs in becoming parties to and implementing the BBNJ Agreement?
- What are the possible opportunities and partnerships that can respond to such needs and priorities and support LLDCs in seizing the opportunities from the BBNJ Agreement?