

# Speech by the President of the Republic at the ratification event of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement

Emmanuel MACRON

Thank you so much !

Thank you, Mr. Presidents,  
Prime Ministers,  
Ministers,  
Ambassadors,  
Heads of International Organization,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm extremely happy to be here with you tonight. And thank you very much, President Boric for your words and your commitment. And we're here together, and indeed, in fact, it didn't start in Nice, but largely before. Thanks to a lot of you and your personal commitments and sometimes your very personal decisions to step up and to decide that things could change and the decision of some individuals or some head of state and governments and some indigenous people deciding to change the world and to say there is clearly something we have to do for our oceans because this is a treasure for the whole world in terms of biodiversity.

This is a key game changer in terms of carbon capture. And in this nexus of biodiversity and climate change, oceans are such a challenge, it's such a way to fix so many issues we have. So, we worked very hard. You started to work very hard years and years and years ago. And thanks to your commitment, we started indeed to protect some marine areas. So we are part of these countries.

Well, in Chile and France we delivered our commitments. We are on 32 % of our marine areas being protected in France. And we will follow up what we decided with first the coalition, and we implemented in Kunming-Montreal in order to make it a global standard. And it's very important because in our exclusive zone it's the best way indeed to protect our biodiversity, our different systems and to change the organization. And this is something we delivered during the past few years altogether. It was the very first important step to preserve this biodiversity.

And for France it's very important because as you know, we are the second-largest marine areas in the world. But it was quite clear that it was not sufficient. Why ? Because 65% of the oceans are beyond these exclusive zones, and it was a wild west without any regulation, 65% of our oceans and with obviously a lot of consequences on a lot of species, a lot of consequences in terms of biodiversity and so on. And it was the core of this fight, as you mentioned, Gabriel, decades ago when we started to have this famous BBNJ and during years and years and years, it was a sort of endless process. And I want to thank all those who made it possible few years ago just to finalize the negotiation and sign the BBNJ. It was clearly a game changer, and you made this change happen.

And the signature of BBNJ, thanks to your capacity to convince China to align some others was a game changer in order to make it possible and have 60% of our oceans now being regulated by that. But it was just the beginning of a second challenge because if you refer to another very famous treaty, Montego, it took 12 years to be enforced, 12 years before a sufficient number of ratifications to make it real. And it was a core challenge in Nice. And this is why I wanted to make this introduction to go Nice. And in Nice, we were all together, we were very much inspired by all of you. And I want to thank Olivier, the team, the French team, and all your delegations for this wonderful job you made all together. And we have one objective. First, we wanted to start with science.

And I want to thank our scientists being present, all the institutions, the individuals, because we had one week based on science to say, "ok, what the decision we will take. It should be inspired and based on science because probably, you notice that we live in a world where sometimes there is no even basic fundamentals". And you can say, "ok, this is a plot. It's not sure that we have climate change. It's not so sure that we have this piece being challenged. So, science was about the basics". We did it. Second, it was a move where head of state and government, NGOs, indigenous people worked closely together in order to mobilize the entire world. The second objective was the ratification of BBNJ to sufficient number of ratifications for BBNJ. And tonight, we are 68 countries. 68 with the full ratification being with, I mean all the procedures at the UN and so on. So, it means that now, I speak under the control of my people in 120 days. Yes, it will be enforced. So, it will be totally real. So, it's clearly a huge change in terms of global governance and will be 100 for the first COP. The first COP for Oceans in 2026, Gabriel as you mentioned, precisely to work together and to follow up. This is clearly a revolution. Now, I'm super happy with that.

But I want to understand how it will be implemented. We started with the idea you signed BBNJ after they explained to me, okay, now you have to ratify. Okay, we ratified 68 because the minimum is 60, so one out of 20 days. Great. We will have the regulation for 65 % of our oceans.

Now, how to make it real ? This is about the enforcement. So now we will start a new phase. We have a bunch of governments working together to make sure that we mobilize our navies, we mobilize sufficient numbers of capacities in order to protect exactly as you mentioned, to discover, to make science and to protect our oceans against illegal fisheries and so on. And how to make sure that to mobilize the private sectors as well for this enforcement. Some governments here want to be part of the gang. So, I continue, and it will be my obsession between now and the COP in 2026 : What is the framework to make it totally real and to be sure that, I mean, in the middle of the Pacific, in the middle of The Indian Ocean in the middle, I mean, when we go to Antarctica, in this newly protected area, we deploy common capacities to make sure that BBNJ will be implemented. This is now our challenge. But enforcement is key. Antarctica, as you mentioned and article, is one of the key areas where we have now to work very hard to make sure that we deploy the same type of organization and protect, protect, protect, and that we set up a new type of cooperation in order to make it possible.

But there is a new frontier : it's deep-sea mining. So, we are some countries and we decided to team up in order to mobilize ourselves and to work very hard to allow science to be deployed, but to have this moratorium to be implemented on all these activities in deep sea mining. So, we enlarged the club, but clearly, we have to mobilize. So, I count on you because this is just a beginning. This is just the beginning. And thanks to your mobilization, thanks to so many activists and NGOs, we managed to stop many projects, even in some countries which sometimes didn't join our coalition. But it worked. And I think it's very important because it's always, always the same approach. It's how to stop some crazy activities when science didn't yet fix the reality. It's super important that we follow up the effort on this, on deep sea mining. And I continue and it will be core for the COP for oceans. And in the same time, I want to also to welcome the entry into force on the WTO agreement on fishery subsidies because it's clearly one of the major successes that we build all together. A lot of people say WTO, I mean, no, I will not repeat it, but yeah. And the best evidence was precisely the fact that you managed to sign this agreement. You delivered, we delivered. But it's this agreement, it's super important because it will stop this clearly these illegal fisheries subsidies, and it will clearly allow us to implement one of the key commitments we took in Nice in the common declaration. So, it's once again a game changer.

And my last point is about science again, we decided a series of operations and new big projects and NEPTUNE is a very important project as well. And I want to thank the scientists being mobilized in this operation, but I want to thank some of the philanthropists and foundations which will work closely with us and with the team in order to make it possible alongside French governments, the European Commission, a lot of governments being here. Gabriel Boric, you mentioned the headquarters of BBNJ and so on. I already took my commitments in Valparaiso, so I already disclosed my position. I'm a little bit conflicted because normally there is a European solidarity because at the time I was not even aware Belgium was candidate. But I back you clearly Valparaiso. So, we will deliver.

And I want to thank all of you, all of you as individuals, as scientists, as activists, as indigenous people, heads of state of government, as member of your parliament, as CEOs of your foundations or industrials. Because five years ago, when we started to work very hard on this coalition with Costa Rica - and I want just to pay tribute to Costa Rica as well because we were together and we worked very hard. And my good friend Ricardo was with me and we worked very hard, hand in hand. When we started this mobilization, a lot of people were super, super skeptical saying "you will never sign BBNJ. The 30%. The 30 by 30, forget it". And deep-sea mining was not even mentioned. It was five years ago. In this crazy world when nothing seems feasible, when we speak about cooperation. We signed, we ratified BBNJ. 30 by 30 was part of Kunming-Montreal. Deep sea mining, we have the moratorium and we will enlarge the club. And we have all the scientific operation in five years' time. Five years. Why ? Because of this multi stakeholder's approach. Because of this collaboration between governments, NGOs, scientists, industrials, foundations. This is the way to work in this current world. This is the only way to work. Being mobilized, deciding to cooperate and step up act. And guess what ? Accelerate. So now we will have to work like crazy between now, between Nice to New York. It was a super journey, but it's not yet finished. Now it's from New York to COP for oceans next year. And I continue to deliver greater success again.

So, once again, thank you very much for your work. Thank you for your mobilization. Thank you for all this great work in common. But I try to just describe a little bit of what we will have to do all together for the years to come. I count on you and you can count on us as well. Thank you very much and thank you to the team. Thank you.