



MARIPOLDATA Ocean Seminar Series

Polycentricity in BBNJ

Wednesday, February 16, 5:00 – 6:30 pm (CET)

Venue: Online

The United Nations is currently in the final stages of negotiating a new UN Agreement for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). Because of its potential for customising global agreements to specific geographical regions, the regional level is being considered as an important vehicle for implementing the emerging BBNJ Agreement. This article uses lessons from regional ocean governance and polycentricity theory, combined with a prior analysis of resilience principles, to reveal that many of the key enabling conditions for a functional polycentric governance system are absent in BBNJ governance. This includes lack of overarching rules for biodiversity conservation, mechanisms for cooperation and conflict resolution, and mismatches in jurisdictional scale. Taken together, these missing elements could hinder achievement of the objectives of the BBNJ Agreement to improve biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and hamper integrated ecosystem-based management. On this basis, the article explores how the emerging BBNJ Agreement could improve the effectiveness of institutions and arrangements governing BBNJ in coping with growing uncertainty and rapid change as well as strengthen the resilience of ocean ecosystems and biodiversity.

Kristina M. Gjerde, J.D., is Senior High Seas Advisor to IUCN's Global Marine and Polar Programme. Kristina received her Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law with a focus on comparative and international law, and practiced admiralty law for several years in a New York City law firm. For the past 30+ years, Kristina has focused on the nexus of law, science, and policy relevant to sustaining marine biodiversity. Kristina has co-founded four science-policy partnerships: the [Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative](#), [The Sargasso Sea Project](#), the [High Seas Alliance](#) and the [Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative](#) (DOSI). In addition to advancing a new UN treaty for marine life beyond boundaries, she has authored or co-authored more than 150 publications. Kristina is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Edinburgh School of Geosciences, an adjunct professor at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, California, and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Siddharth Shekhar Yadav is the Advisor (on Climate Change, Oceans, and the UN High Seas/ BBNJ Treaty) to the Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of the Republic of Vanuatu to the United Nations, New York. Since 2018, Siddharth has supported decision-making in a number of multilateral negotiations at the UN, including the BBNJ Treaty. Siddharth has represented Vanuatu at the UN General Assembly, the UN Climate Action Summit, and the Youth Climate Summit at the UN Headquarters. Siddharth has also represented Vanuatu at the 6th 'Our Ocean Conference' in Oslo, Norway, and at the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Regional BBNJ IGC Workshop in Pohnpei, the Federated States of Micronesia. Siddharth is committed to building resilience to climate change and other pressures on biodiversity and ecosystems.

The monthly [MARIPOLDATA Ocean Seminar Series](#) offer a virtual space to get information and engage in exchanges on ocean governance issues, through presentations by international experts from academia, governments, international organisations and civil society. It is organised by the MARIPOLDATA project.

To register: via email to ina.tessnow-vonwysocki@univie.ac.at, indicating your name and institution. You will receive an email with further information and the link to participate in the virtual space

More information: <https://www.maripoldata.eu/newsevents/#oceanseminarseries>