

Application for observer status

A. Information about the organization

1. Name of organization

The Ocean and Us

2. Address of headquarters

Enkhuizensestraat 20

2587RR

Den Haag

The Netherlands

3. Addresses of all branches and/or regional headquarters

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4. Telephone number

+31 6 46 17 75 38

5. Fax number

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6. Email address

info@theoceanandus.org

7. Name, title and contact details of focal point

Farah Obaidullah

Founder and Director

farah@theoceanandus.org

8. Background information on the organization

"[The Ocean and Us](#)" is a non-governmental organization (NGO) focused on the protection of marine ecosystems through advocacy for strict international environmental law, and the inclusion of the feminine and collective perspectives in ocean decision making. We believe that a diversity of voices is crucial to our mission to safeguard a healthy ocean. We actively engage and respect the knowledge, contributions, and needs of global communities, especially those directly affected by ocean issues. Established in 2017, the organization is based in The Hague, Netherlands, with a particular focus on high-seas biodiversity, sustainable fisheries, and the preservation of marine ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction. "The Ocean and Us" works to ensure healthy oceans for future generations by influencing policy, promoting science-based decision-making, and supporting marine conservation efforts. Our primary areas of focus include ocean literacy, marine biodiversity, the prevention of harmful marine activities such as deep-sea mining, and the protection of vulnerable ecosystems from overexploitation.

We do this through a (gender) inclusive lens. To this end "The Ocean and Us" brings together women-expert voices through the Women4Oceans platform (a project of "The Ocean and Us").

9. Is the organization a member of, affiliated to or otherwise associated with another organization that has been granted observer status with the Authority?

Yes, "The Ocean and Us" is a member of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), which has observer status with the International Seabed Authority (ISA).

10. Is the organization affiliated to consultants of the Authority, contractors with the Authority, entities in connection with the law of the sea, the offshore and deep-sea mining industry, research institutes or the mineral marketing and processing industry?

No, "The Ocean and Us" is not affiliated with consultants, contractors, or other entities connected to the law of the sea, offshore or deep-sea mining, or the mineral marketing and processing industries.

11. Relationships with intergovernmental organizations

"The Ocean and Us" is an accredited member of the United Nations Ocean Conference. The founder, Farah Obaidullah has participated in numerous multilateral fora including the European Parliament, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the recently adopted BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) treaty process, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Seabed Authority Assembly proceedings in 2023.

12. List of publications and/or other relevant documentation

The Ocean and Us (<https://bit.ly/3HFs1b5>) Springer Nature, 2023 a book bringing together the expertise of over 35 ocean specialists (all women) including a chapter on ocean governance, a chapter on the deep-sea and relevant chapters pertaining to areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Contributions to collaborative reports e.g. The Changing Seascape of Deep-Sea Mining in Europe. <https://seas-at-risk.org/publications/thechangingseascape/>
Multiple policy briefs published as a member of the Deep-Sea Conservation Coalition.

Founder, Farah Obaidullah has spoken at numerous international fora on: the High Seas, governance of the High Seas, the emerging interest to mine deep-sea resources, complexities in overlapping governance regimes including legal challenges and the importance of elevating women's perspectives and contributions in ocean decision making. Fora include: The UN Ocean Conference, the European Parliament, the German Mission to the UN, UN BBNJ negotiations, World Ocean Summit, The European Court of Auditors and many more.

Women4Oceans representation: <https://www.theoceanandus.org/join-us.html>

B. Interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly

13. Briefly outline how your organization intends to demonstrate its interest in matters under consideration by the Assembly, including by answering questions 14 to 17 and by providing any other relevant information related to the application for observer status.

"The Ocean and Us" is dedicated to the protection of marine ecosystems and ensuring that seabed activities under the jurisdiction of the ISA are carried out in a manner that prevents irreversible damage to biodiversity. Our organization actively contributes to the development of marine environmental policies and best practices that align with the work of the ISA, especially in the context of deep-sea mining. Through collaboration with scientific experts, we seek to provide data-driven insights and recommendations for the sustainable management of deep-sea resources. We also engage with local and global stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of marine conservation and responsible seabed governance. At a national level, we engage in particular with the Netherlands government and Dutch political parties. We expect this work to expand in the following years.

14. Briefly outline whether and how the purposes or activities of the organization relate to the work of the Authority.

Our core mission aligns with the ISA's mandate to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of deep-sea resources. "The Ocean and Us" focuses on preventing environmental degradation in the high seas and areas beyond national jurisdiction. Our advocacy for precautionary approaches to marine resource extraction directly supports the ISA's goal of developing responsible regulations for seabed mining that safeguard the environment. Additionally, our commitment to promoting the protection of marine biodiversity, with a particular focus on feminine and collective perspectives, makes us a valuable (and unique) contributor to the ongoing discussions on the protection of the marine environment.

15. Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the work of the Authority, for example by providing specialized information, advice or expertise, or by identifying or helping to procure the services of experts or consultants.

"The Ocean and Us" intends to offer guidance on sustainable deep-sea resource management by providing, where possible, scientific, legal, and civil society perspectives, as well as policy recommendations. We will seek to contribute to discussions on the development of environmental regulations for seabed activities, with a focus on the precautionary principle, ecosystem resilience, and long-term conservation outcomes. In particular, we will bring forward feminine and collective perspectives to enrich and balance discussions. Additionally, leveraging our connections in scientific and legal communities enables us to assist the ISA in obtaining specialized information and expertise on key issues such as the environmental impact and public perceptions of deep-sea mining and the governance of the Area.

16. Briefly outline whether and how your organization has the expertise and the capacity to contribute, within its field of competence, to the work of the Authority, in particular in connection with the law of the sea, the protection of the marine environment, the offshore and deep-sea mining industry, technology, minerals processing and marketing, activities in the Area and marine scientific research in the Area.

Our organization is able to support the ISA in addressing complex environmental challenges related to the law of the sea, particularly in areas beyond national jurisdiction and public perceptions relating to the common heritage of humankind. "The Ocean and Us" founder has over two decades of experience in ocean advocacy including UN processes related to the Law of the Sea. Where relevant and deemed necessary "The Ocean and Us" will seek to bring in capacity to conduct research on the environmental impacts of deep-sea activities and provide actionable recommendations to mitigate these impacts.

17. Briefly outline whether and how your organization intends to contribute to the capacity-building programmes and initiatives of the Authority (e.g., Secretary- General's award, voluntary commitments of the Authority).

"The Ocean and Us" is committed to supporting the ISA's capacity-building initiatives by sharing scientific knowledge, and collaborating with member states to enhance their understanding of marine resource management. In particular with our global network of women ocean experts, we aim to engage in the ISA's Secretary-General's awards and contribute to voluntary commitments that enhance capacity in marine environmental protection with a focus on boosting diverse voices in discussions pertaining to the deep-seas and areas beyond national jurisdiction. Our unique experience in elevating women's contributions and participation combined with our deep commitment to ocean literacy and awareness programs in marine conservation will aid the ISA in strengthening global capacity in this field.



Farah Obaidullah
Founder and Director of The Ocean and Us

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