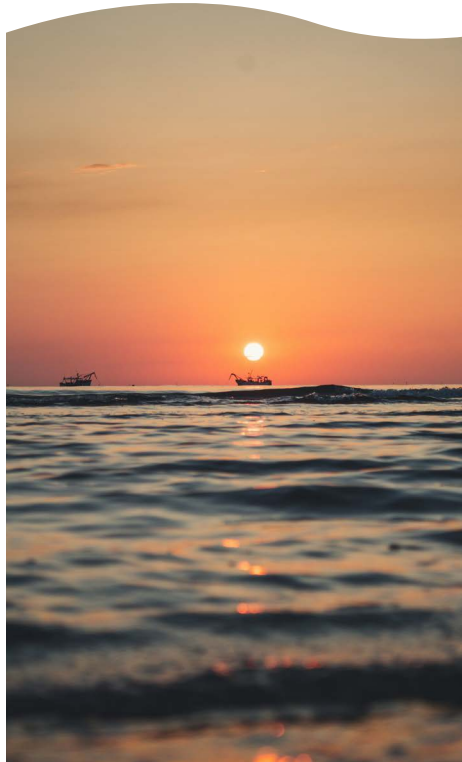




OCEAN & CLIMATE
PLATFORM

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**A Collective Voice to Turn the Tide
for the Ocean, Climate and Biodiversity**





The Ocean & Climate Platform: Who are we?

The **Ocean & Climate Platform (OCP)** is an **international network of more than 115 organisations** from civil society – including NGOs, research institutions, aquariums, foundations, private sector entities, public institutions, local authorities, and international organisations.

Created in the lead-up to COP21 in Paris with the support of France and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the OCP aims to **promote scientific expertise** on the role played by the ocean and its ecosystems in the global climate system, and to **advocate for stronger integration of ocean-climate-biodiversity interactions** in decision-making.

Acting as an **interface between science and policy**, the OCP provides a space for reflection and dialogue between the scientific community, civil society, and policy-makers, fostering a common and holistic approach to ocean health in the context of climate change and biodiversity loss.

This document was produced by the Ocean & Climate Platform

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THE OCP'S MANDATES IN INTERNATIONAL FORA

- The OCP holds the observer status to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC), along with several key roles:

- Focal point for “Ocean & Coastal Zones” under the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MP-GCA), which mobilises non-state actors to raise ambition and accelerate climate action, with the support of the UN High-Level Climate Champions.
- Coordinator of the “Ocean Breakthroughs” campaign, co-led by the MP-GCA on Ocean & Coastal Zones and the UN High-level Climate Champions, to drive action and investments from non-state actors in the five key sectors of shipping, marine conservation, aquatic food, coastal tourism and ocean renewable energy.
- Expert for the “Ocean and Coastal Zones” group of the Nairobi Work Programme on Adaptation, which serves as a knowledge hub to support Parties in integrating marine and coastal issues in their adaptation and resilience strategies.
- Lead for the “Ocean and Coastal Systems” Taskforce within the Sharm el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda, which rallies countries and non-state actors behind a shared set of adaptation targets.
- Expert for the “Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue”, mandated by the COP to strengthen and mainstream ocean-based action under the UNFCCC processes.

- The OCP is an observer organisation to the **United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD) and to the **United Nations Economic and Social Council** (ECOSOC).

- The OCP, together with the Varda Group, was mandated by the governments of France and Costa Rica to facilitate the mobilisation of civil society for the preparation of the 3rd **United Nations Ocean Conference** (UNOC) in Nice in June 2025.

- The OCP has been participating in the French governmental review of the **IPCC reports** on the chapters relating to ocean topics, including the Special Reports on 1.5°C, on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate and the Sixth Assessment Report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, the Ocean & Climate Platform (OCP) unveils its new policy recommendations. Driven by a shared sense of urgency and hope, OCP members have once again joined forces to **turn the tide for the ocean, the climate, and biodiversity**. Developed through a collaborative and inclusive process, these recommendations capture the collective expertise and commitment of the OCP network.

The document sets out a clear vision: **decisions guided by science, solutions delivered with urgency, and systems driving the ocean's decline profoundly transformed**. To turn commitment into meaningful impact, we must fundamentally rethink the way we value,

govern, and interact with the ocean. The transition ahead is not only about reducing greenhouse gas emissions or ending harmful practices, but about restoring balance – building economies that nurture life, institutions that are inclusive, and societies that thrive in harmony with nature.

The document concludes with **ten key proposals to guide decision-makers** in shaping governance priorities. These actionable measures form a collective agenda to accelerate ocean-based action, strengthen governance, and align collective efforts across sectors and scales. Together, they chart the course for a new era – turning ambition into tangible progress for the ocean, climate, and people.

ACRONYMS

BBNJ : Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

CBD : Convention on Biological Diversity

COP : Conference of the Parties

ECOSOC : Economic and Social Council

IMO : International Maritime Organization

IPCC : Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ITLOS : International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

ISA : International Seabed Authority

mCDR : Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal

MP-GCA : Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

OCP : Ocean & Climate Platform

UN : United Nations

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFCCC : United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNOC : United Nations Ocean Conference

WTO : World Trade Organization

TURNING THE TIDE FOR THE BLUE PLANET

The **ocean is under threat**, and with it, all the vital services it provides for climate regulation, biodiversity conservation, and human well-being. Climate change is exposing it to major, sometimes irreversible, changes. The ocean's ability to absorb carbon dioxide is decreasing, triggering a dangerous feedback loop in which worsening climate impacts further degrade its health and, ultimately, our own. These stresses are exacerbated by intensifying human pressures, namely overexploitation, land and

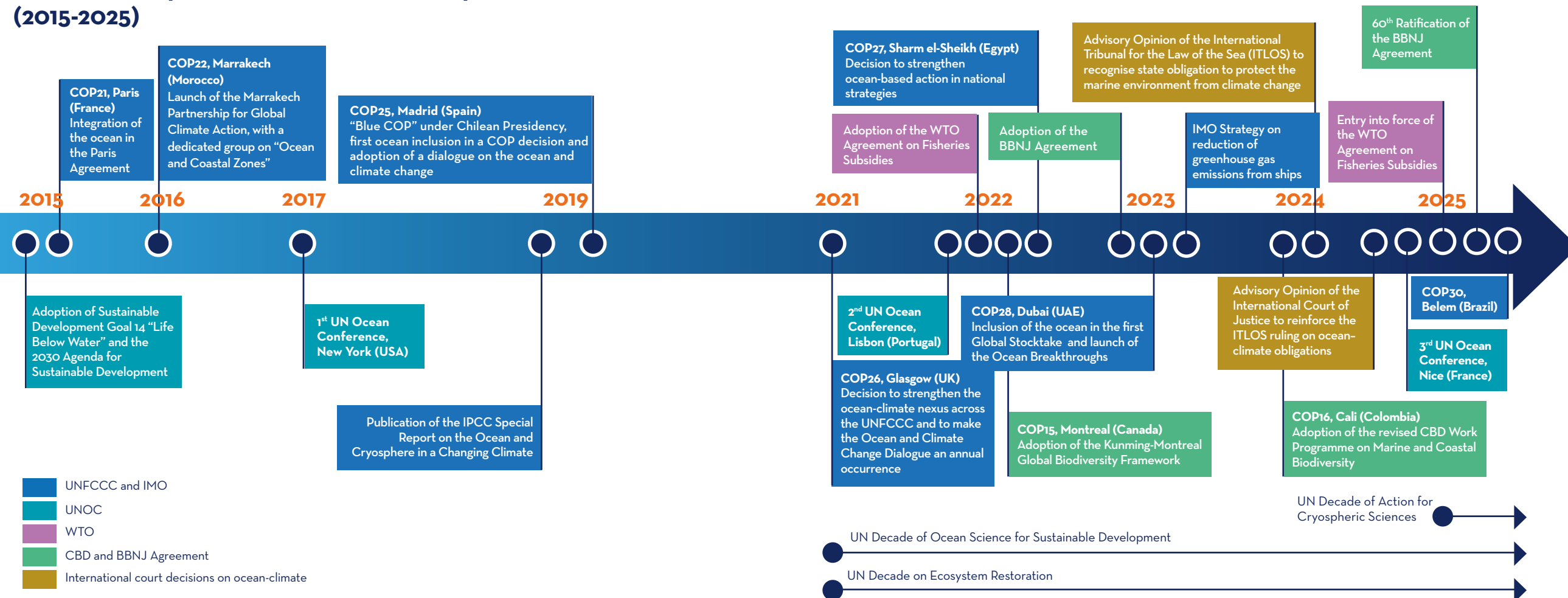
sea use changes, pollution, and invasive alien species. The **consequences are already visible** and, while coastal communities experience the most immediate impacts, they affect us all. The past decade has brought **significant progress** in recognising the ocean in the climate and biodiversity agendas. From a mere mention in the Paris Agreement to increasing inclusion in the climate regime, the ocean is no longer seen only as a victim, but as central to the solution. Indeed, **ocean-related solutions** – across marine

conservation, ocean renewable energy, shipping, aquatic food, coastal tourism, and offshore oil and gas – have the capacity to deliver up to a third of the emission reduction needed by 2050, making them critical in achieving a net-zero, resilient, just and nature-positive future.

Yet, **progress remains too slow** and measures taken are largely superficial, falling short of the deep transformative change we need to address the scale of global challenges. The first-ever Global Stocktake of climate action

revealed a sobering truth: the world is not on track to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Current policies place us on a trajectory of 2.5°C to 2.9°C of global warming by 2100 – well above the Agreement's 1.5°C threshold. And as governments struggle with fulfilling their commitments, the **credibility gap continues to grow**, eroding trust in international processes – in a parallel socio-political feedback loop arguably just as dangerous as the physical ones. Meanwhile, the **geopolitical landscape is shifting rapidly**. Science faces growing

Timeline of key ocean-climate-biodiversity milestones (2015-2025)



attacks, while disinformation continues to spread, particularly on climate change where evidence still meets denial. **Multilateralism and international cooperation are being undermined**, highlighting the urgent need to rethink and strengthen our multilateral processes for genuine partnership and positive collaboration. In this challenging context, **civil society has a key role to play in promoting science**, evidence-based policy and collaborative action, while urging the accountability of decision-makers to honour their commitments. To remain agents of change, organisations from civil society **must be able to operate freely**, without political interference, with full control over their activities and funding.

Now is not the time for hesitation, but for transformation. As COP30 marks the tenth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, we enter a **new era for climate action**. With the first full cycle of the Agreement complete, the groundwork is done: we must now move with urgency **from negotiations to implementation**. Governments must act decisively and set our climate trajectory on the right pack, working alongside non-state actors, including the private sector, who can scale up the solutions.

Turning the tide requires breaking free from siloed and short-term thinking. Ocean-climate- biodiversity action must be pursued in synergy, aligned across relevant international frameworks, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Agreement on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With only five years remaining until 2030, the window to fulfill our global goals is rapidly closing. Yet, **five years can still change the course of our future** if met with political courage, determination, and collaboration. But this window should also serve to anticipate and start **shaping the future of global environmental governance**

beyond 2030 – shifting from crisis response to long-term resilience, building on lessons learnt and laying the foundation for systemic transformation.

Protecting the ocean, our life-support system, urgently requires **tackling the direct drivers of its decline**, namely by **phasing out fossil fuels and ending harmful practices** – but also preventing the introduction of new ones such as deep-sea mining – as we cannot thrive without a healthy ocean. As the **One Health approach** reminds us, our fate is inseparable from that of the ocean.

To turn this ambition into a reality, we must reshape the systems that drive this degradation, and shift how we value the ocean – moving from domination to stewardship, from extraction to harmony. When addressed through a holistic lens – integrating environmental health, social equity and economic resilience – the **ocean holds the key to a sustainable future**. This transformation calls for both immediate and long-term actions, blending incremental progress with bold, radical changes.

To that end, the Ocean & Climate Platform calls decision-makers to:

1. **UNDERSTAND** – Ocean-climate-biodiversity knowledge for informed decisions
2. **DELIVER** – Ocean-based solutions for climate, nature, and people
3. **RESHAPE** – New socio-economic, financial and political systems for a thriving ocean



UNDERSTAND OCEAN-CLIMATE-BIODIVERSITY

KNOWLEDGE FOR INFORMED DECISIONS

In a rapidly changing world, where science is increasingly contested, we must affirm our commitment to both research and the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as essential foundations for decision-making. Ensuring that decisions are guided by the best available knowledge of the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus requires that we:

CONSOLIDATE AND INTEGRATE OCEAN OBSERVATION, RESEARCH, AND CAPACITY-SHARING

- Increase public and private funding for universities and research centers, prioritising funding mechanisms that support international partnerships and improve the capacity of countries with limited research infrastructures, particularly in low- to middle-income countries;
- Support the sharing of research infrastructures (e.g., vessels, laboratories, observatories, aquariums), human and institutional capacity, and data, to address current disparities and ensure equitable research capacities both across and within nations;
- Develop inclusive and ethical observation systems integrating long-term ecological and social data (including human uses and activities) to improve real-time observation and understanding of marine biodiversity, climate change, ecological processes, and their interlinkages to human societies;

- Strengthen knowledge across the following priority areas: (i) coastal and open-ocean carbon cycle, (ii) design and effectiveness of coastal and marine nature-based solutions for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation, (iii) ecosystem-based and climate-smart fisheries management, (iv) interlinkages of ocean health and human well-being in all its dimensions, (v) role of mesophotic and deep-sea ecosystems in global climate regulation and the impacts of human activities on them, (vi) impacts of climate change on vulnerable marine social-ecological systems, including polar and coral reef systems, and resulting feedbacks on their capacity to adapt, and (vii) migratory and habitat changes of human and non-human species.

PROMOTE THE CO-DESIGN OF KNOWLEDGE

- Recognise, value and support the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and ensure they are fully integrated into ocean-climate-biodiversity scientific research;
- Improve the inclusivity of research across geographies, cultures, knowledge systems, genders, and generations through enhanced access to dedicated funding, equitable participation in research, intercultural and intersectoral dialogues, as well as codes of conduct for research practitioners;
- Engage citizens in research through participatory science – including data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, and solution implementation – building on local ecological knowledge and strengthening their understanding of and trust in science.

VALUE AND DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE OCEAN

- Enhance the sharing of knowledge on the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus to all citizens from an early age to foster public understanding of and connection to the ocean through educational reforms, culturally relevant approaches, and diverse tools, such as arts, culture, and digital platforms;
- Enable reciprocal learning between communities, decision-makers, practitioners, and researchers through the creation of dedicated communities of practices;
- Ensure verified and inclusive knowledge constitutes a foundation for all decisions by engaging with knowledge holders from diverse geographies and backgrounds at all stages of the decision making process;
- Ensure ocean knowledge informs innovation and business practices at all levels, from local initiatives to global markets, so that research outputs lead to tangible, market-ready solutions.



DELIVER OCEAN-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE, NATURE AND PEOPLE

Now is the time for all actors to move from commitment to implementation. If we are to rise to the challenge, we must turn to the ocean – a vital source of integrated solutions to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. The ocean not only regulates our climate and sustains marine biodiversity, it also provides food, supports human well-being, and underpins our economies. Leveraging these solutions requires us to:

DECARBONISE MARITIME SECTORS

- Stop all fossil fuel subsidies and new expansion projects (concessions, licensing or leasing), while planning for the decommissioning of offshore oil and gas installations, including through robust environmental impact assessment processes;
- Support maritime industries in cutting greenhouse gas emissions, while setting measurable biodiversity targets to avoid and mitigate environmental and social impacts, in particular:
 - Achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for maritime transport and related services by 2050, as set by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), by supporting the deployment of zero and net-zero fuels, wind propulsion, and alternative technologies, and energy efficiency measures for vessels (e.g., speed reduction and rerouting), using revenues from greenhouse gas pricing mechanisms;

- Support the transition of the fishing sector to energy-efficient and low-emission practices, from net to plate, including phasing out high-impact gears, such as bottom trawls, that damage the seabed, compromise ocean productivity and release stored carbon;
- Halve greenhouse gas emissions from the tourism sector, across the entire value chain, including by developing energy-efficient and low-emission infrastructures, shifting to sustainable mobility, and adopting greener business models;
- Accelerate sustainable renewable marine energy deployment through supportive policies, concessional finance, and integrated marine spatial planning, ensuring biodiversity-positive safeguards and international cooperation on technology transfer and capacity-building;
- Ensure that marine Carbon Dioxide Removal (mCDR) and any other geo-engineering activities, at any scale (including research), are subject to comprehensive environmental impact assessments prior to approval to avoid harm to marine and coastal ecosystems, guided by an integrated governance and monitoring frameworks, and do not divert financial or political efforts from decarbonisation.

PROTECT AND RESTORE COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

- Prioritise the quality of marine protected areas over their sole coverage, by prioritising fully protected areas within and beyond national jurisdiction that are ecologically representative, well-connected, equitably governed, and effectively managed, to secure positive outcomes for biodiversity, food security, livelihood, and climate;
- Commit to the protection from anthropogenic degradation and sustainable management of 100% of coastal blue carbon ecosystems (seagrasses, tidal marshes, mangroves) to prevent irreversible carbon release and safeguard their long-term role in climate mitigation, biodiversity support and coastal adaptation;
- Make the recognition of other effective area-based conservation measures conditional on robust evidence of long-term in situ biodiversity conservation benefits, provided through ongoing monitoring and supported by adaptive and equitable governance, so as to effectively complement protected areas, integrate with wider seascapes and strengthen ecological connectivity;
- Prioritise conservation as passive restoration over active restoration, particularly in areas where it appears unrealistic (e.g., deep-sea and mesophotic ecosystems), to allow ecosystems to recover naturally, and ensure additionality to existing and planned area-based conservation to maximise ecological recovery and climate benefits.

ADAPT AND ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES, ECOSYSTEMS, AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

- Design long-term coastal adaptation pathways, including in urban areas, to combine and sequence diverse responses over space and time, namely coastal development restrictions, protection, accommodation, nature-based solutions and managed retreat;
- Adopt a dynamic management approach that allows adaptation measures to evolve over time, accounts for climate uncertainty responding to shifting environmental conditions and emerging climate or socio-economic tipping points, and reflects long-term resilience goals;
- Support maritime sectors and industries in adapting to climate change impacts, by establishing robust maritime spatial planning that integrates land-sea interactions and promoting climate-resilient infrastructures and value chains, to reduce their impacts on the coastline, enhance the resilience of communities and ecosystems, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions;
- Support the transformation of fisheries and aquaculture towards higher sustainability standards and improved adaptation to climate change or biodiversity erosion, including by strengthening all management standards, promoting fair and low-impact practices (e.g., the ecosystem approach, pesco-ecology, and low-trophic-level aquaculture), and supporting reskilling or upskilling fishers.





RESHAPE NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS FOR A THRIVING OCEAN

Ocean health must be restored, not further compromised. Instead, it is our socio-economic, financial and political systems – drivers of its decline – that need transformation. We must move away from models built on exploitation toward approaches rooted in care, sufficiency, and interdependence, such as the regenerative blue economy which protects and restores marine ecosystems while fostering inclusive growth, prosperity, and resilience. This shift requires both immediate action and long-term vision, starting with the following actions:

SHIFT TO NEW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUES

- Account for all dimensions of human and ecosystem well-being (health, ecological, socio-economic, and cultural), including through appropriate risk and vulnerability assessments, and make their improvement the focus of dedicated policies;
- Adopt a rights-based approach that addresses power asymmetries to recognise all stakeholders and rightholders, including historically marginalised groups – such as Indigenous Peoples, local communities, small-scale artisanal fishers, women, youth – and ensure their meaningful and effective engagement in decision-making and action at all levels;

- Enhance ocean justice by strengthening capacity and partnerships to improve understanding and foster equity, mainstreaming multidimensional equity in ocean policies and practices, and tracking its integration to guide improvements;
- Advance the regenerative blue economy to drive system-level shifts that align economies with ecological integrity, solidarity, and long-term climate resilience, including by redirecting harmful subsidies, mobilising blended finance and supporting small and medium enterprises.

REFORMING FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

- Create enabling conditions to unlock and sustain large-scale investments in ocean protection – recognising that returns come from the continued provision of vital services – by strengthening regulatory incentives, mobilising public-private co-financing, and building investment readiness programmes that prioritise long-term ecosystem resilience over short-term bankability;
- Condition public and private finance on clear, measurable ocean-positive criteria to ensure investments align with and contribute to sustainability and equity goals, by integrating environmental and social externalities into national accounting systems and developing fiscal incentives and de-risking tools to mobilise private capital;
- Enable direct and equitable access to finance for frontline coastal communities, including marginalised groups, by designing financing mechanisms informed by local needs and experiences, and unlocking small, implementable amounts that support locally-driven solutions;
- Redirect environmentally and socially harmful subsidies – particularly those that incentivise high-emission and high-impact maritime activities – toward integrated ocean-based solutions, and ensure transparent subsidy monitoring and reporting, supported by robust impact assessments, for any renewal of public funding.

TRANSFORM POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

- Embrace decentralised, polycentric and inclusive governance models to ensure that policy and management decisions are made at the most immediate level possible and solutions are tailored to the local context, thus fostering local ownership, a shared culture of risk, and active stakeholder engagement in building a future that reflects their needs and aspirations;
- Bridge global ambitions with local implementation, including through regional leadership to enhance coordination across multiple levels of governance, mobilise local capacities to strengthen governance systems, and develop cross-border solutions, such as seascapes;
- Build accountable and effective ocean governance at all levels by strengthening enforcement and compliance mechanisms through stronger sanctions and incentives, while enhancing transparency, improving learning outcomes and providing relevant capacity;
- Align ocean-based climate and biodiversity efforts across all levels to enhance policy coherence and effectiveness, by developing integrated solutions that are both climate-smart and nature-positive, coordinating the development and implementation of national climate and biodiversity strategies, and harmonising global goals across frameworks.



CALL TO ACTION

The ocean has the power to shape our future – sustaining climate, biodiversity, and people. Ten years after Paris, the Ocean & Climate Platform renews its call for a “healthy ocean for a protected climate”.

Transformative change is needed – shifting from crisis response to long-term resilience, from siloed thinking to systems thinking. Now is the time for implementation, driving science-based solutions, underpinned by robust financing, to deliver meaningful, lasting change.

To turn this vision into a reality, the Ocean & Climate Platform stands united – raising a collective voice to turn the tide for the ocean, the climate and biodiversity – urging decision-makers to:

1. Halt the expansion of fossil fuels through a ban on all new projects and redirection of subsidies, while **accelerating the just and equitable transition to responsible renewable energy** by developing time-bound pathways aligned with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement;

2. Include ocean-based solutions in national strategies for climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience (across the key sectors of ocean renewable energy, shipping, marine conservation, aquatic food, coastal tourism, and offshore oil and gas), and support multistakeholder efforts to deliver on the **Ocean Breakthroughs**;

3. Develop a holistic governance of marine carbon dioxide removal – building on the CBD Decision X/33 and leveraging the London Convention and Protocol and BBNJ Agreement - with a strict application of the precautionary principle to evaluate potential impacts before any field experiments, and guided by rigorous and independent research;

4. Adopt the International Maritime Organization Net Zero Framework to transition the shipping sector to zero and net zero fuels, technologies and sources of energies, complemented by additional national or regional incentives and regulatory frameworks, as well as equity safeguards;

5. Effectively protect at least 30% of the ocean in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including 30% of the high seas under full or high protection, and strive to operationalise the **Protection Principle** to make ocean protection the norm rather than the exception;

6. Adopt a moratorium on deep-sea mining until comprehensive independent scientific information is obtained, ensuring that any mining would not degrade oceanic carbon sequestration or cause damage to marine biodiversity, ecosystems and the environment, and that social license is obtained and necessary governance structures are in place;

7. Ban harmful fisheries subsidies in line with, and building upon, the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, to address fuel incentives that enable high-emitting and high-impact industrial fishing operations and redirect support to sustainable fishing practices and conservation;

8. Design and implement dynamic coastal adaptation strategies, including managed retreat, in collaboration with local governments and stakeholders, prioritising ecosystem-based adaptation where appropriate, and engage with the **Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience Coalition** of cities and regions to adapt to sea-level rise impacts;

9. Strengthen synergies for more integrated global ocean governance and action (UNFCCC, CBD, ISA, BBNJ, UNOC, etc.), including by convening a **‘World Leaders Summit for the Ocean’**, in parallel with the first BBNJ COP, and subsequent ones as appropriate, – gathering Heads of State, Heads of UN agencies, and civil society representatives – to align efforts across global processes;

10. Launch a global and inclusive process to define a post-2030 agenda, building on the lessons learnt from the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure their continuity in a revised roadmap focused on integration, efficiency, and transparency, to achieve a more desirable future for People and Planet.

MEMBERS OF THE OCEAN & CLIMATE PLATFORM







OCEAN & CLIMATE PLATFORM

ENDORSED BY:



2021
2030 United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:

