

Written Statement
2025 UN Ocean Conference
June, 13th 2025

Humanities and Social Sciences for the Ocean

Ocean is Culture. As UNOC 2025 comes to a close, it appears that the preservation of communities' cultural values stands out in united nations and their organizations' preoccupations and commitments to act for the Ocean.

Ocean is a condition of survival but also a way of life.

The issue is to preserve biodiversity but also to understand human relation to the Ocean, including resistance to knowledge-based policies, and find the levers of efficient collective actions.

Studying literature in context with novels such as *Barrage contre le Pacifique* (*The Sea Wall*) by Marguerite Duras leads us to understand how a disappearing world triggers reactions of frustration and resistance.

The preservation of Ocean is about individual and collective behavior, market incentives, local and international governance, in a word the traditional substance of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Understanding the *longue durée* of ocean peoples' cultures and connections reading works such as *Islanders* (*Océaniens*) by Nicholas Thomas is of the essence to act for the preservation of the Ocean.

Ocean literacy is crucial to public awareness.

Humanities and Social Sciences have constantly and consistently brought life to the past and present of oceans and ocean-related issues in the minds and hearts of thousands even millions of humans around the globe.

A key issue to reach out humankind is knowledge transfer.

In the age of Anthropocene, ocean-related human activities must be researched deeper and further, in cooperation with societies.

Most of the threats to ocean health, such as expansion of plastic residues, destruction of coral reefs, annihilation of livestock, are of human origins.

This urges science-based decision-making to take into account Humanities and Social Sciences.

Their potential was addressed in the concept paper for Ocean Action Panel 2. However, Ocean Action Panel 3 underscored the lack of funding for Ocean science, in which programs for research in the Oceanic Humanities and Social Sciences are at best underdeveloped.

As a foundation created by the author of a pioneering masterpiece *The Mediterranean*, Fernand Braudel, the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme responded to the call from the scientific community in the Humanities and Social Sciences by opening a program on [Oceans](#).

Today we are calling for an alliance of Humanities and Social Sciences across the globe to push the momentum for a sustained agenda of research on the Ocean across disciplines, and for transnational instruments for funding research.

Antonin Cohen

President of the Fondation
Maison des Sciences de l'homme

Find out more about our commitment to Ocean Research and Knowledge Sharing:

Our position paper | [Ocean as a Way of Life](#)

Our Program | [Oceans: Linking science with society to protect our ocean sustainably](#)

Our platform dedicated to academic videos and podcasts | [Canal-U](#)
