

## **Comment from the Pew Charitable Trusts**

### **Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

#### **I. Introduction (500 words)**

- Setting the scene and defining the issues

The Pew Charitable Trusts is a global research and public policy organization, operating as an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to serving the public. Our portfolio includes environmental, health, governance and consumer policy initiatives – with programs dedicated to improving civic life, healthcare, governance, the economic health of families, as well as a range of environmental initiatives. We support leveraging the interlinkages between the SDGs, improving ocean health would have real impacts across all the SDGs.

We provide technical expertise, develop and manage research projects, and communicate scientific results to inform conservation policy and the sustainable management of natural resources. Good conservation decisions depend on good science and we support research on a range of marine issues including: marine and coastal habitat protection and management, fisheries management, nature-based solutions, and plastic pollution. We are actively communicating research results to inform policy decisions relating to: the establishment and effective management of marine protected areas (MPAs), finalization of a high seas treaty that provides mechanisms for establishing MPAs and conducting environmental assessments, ensuring regulations passed by the International Seabed Authority are precautionary and science-based, ending illegal fishing and improving fisheries management including through the adoption of precautionary harvest strategies for managed stocks, and the protection of coastal wetland ecosystems<sup>1</sup> in recognition of their mitigation and adaptation values. For each initiative, increasing scientific knowledge and research capacity is necessary to identify the policies which will best deliver on SDG 14's vision of a more sustainable future for the ocean.

Several SDG targets are set to mature in 2020 (including 14.2: sustainably managing ecosystems, 14.4: regulate harvesting and ending overfishing, 14.5: conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, 14.6: eliminating harmful subsidies). New targets should be set to ensure the continued implementation, scale-up, and success of these goals through the next decade, ensuring targets are science-based. These expanded SDGs will be necessary to ensure linkages across other goals continue to be leveraged.

#### **II. Analysis on the interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs**

SDG14 has many inter-linkages across the SDGs and must be considered holistically. The ocean contributes to global food security and economic security for billions of people each year, making a vital contribution to a wide range of SDGs. Examples include:

##### **SDG 1 (No Poverty):**

- A healthy ocean produces approximately \$3-6 trillion USD in economic value annually, supporting upwards of 3 billion people.<sup>1</sup> Protecting the ocean is key to protecting the many ecosystem services and economic benefits it provides including tourism, seafood, a medium for transportation, and coastal protections.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Trade-and-Environment/Oceans-Economy.aspx>

- Protecting the ocean could itself lead to job creation, directly helping to reduce poverty. For example, addressing the problem of plastic pollution will require investment in new products and innovations in the recycling, reuse, design, and collection of plastic. Our analysis shows new systems to reduce plastic pollution could lead to 700,000 new jobs in the Global South.

#### **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):**

- The ocean supplies approximately 3 billion people with their primary source of protein.<sup>2</sup> A healthy ocean is a productive ocean that feeds many and can thrive if managed sustainably. Better fisheries management is essential to achieving SDG 2.

#### **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being):**

- Coastal protections can lead to improved or preserved shoreline buffers, which protect lives and livelihoods. It is thus important to protect coastal ecosystems including wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs.

#### **SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic Growth):**

- The ocean is an economic foundation for many who work in fisheries, tourism, and recreation industries. Coral reefs alone can generate tourism revenues of approximately \$36 billion USD per year.<sup>3</sup>
- A transition to a world with less plastic leakage into the ocean could involve less informal plastic collection (waste pickers in garbage dumps) and a larger share of collection and recycling served by the formal sector.

#### **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure):**

- Addressing the problem of marine pollution will call for development of better plastic alternatives and recycling technologies. More innovation and infrastructure is needed on this front.

#### **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities):**

- Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) can help coastal and island communities continue with their cultural and traditional practices.

#### **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production):**

- Effective MPAs can increase productivity within sustainably managed fisheries. Marine reserves have been shown to result in more fish, bigger fish, greater biodiversity and more fish biomass. Responsible consumption means ensuring there are fish in the ocean for future generations.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/content/towards-investment-in-sustainable-fisheries.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://oceanwealth.org/ecosystem-services/recreation-tourism/>

- Pollution compounds the adverse effects the ocean suffers under climate change. Plastic pollution, for example, is estimated to reach 8 million tons per year and is harmful to wildlife and humans.<sup>4</sup>

### **SDG 13 (Climate Action):**

- Scientific evidence points to effective MPAs as a way to promote resilience and adapt to the negative impacts of climate change affecting ocean health, including ocean acidification and decreased O<sub>2</sub> availability; tropicalization; and sea-level rise.
- Coastal and marine protections can provide mitigation and/or adaptation services. For example, coastal protection of mangroves can allow for carbon sequestration at rates 3-5x per acre compared to that of other tropical rainforests.<sup>5</sup>
- Reducing plastic consumption would also lead to reduced greenhouse emissions. In our modeling it is possible to reduce GHG from the plastic lifecycle by 25% by 2040.

### **III. Challenges and opportunities in leveraging these interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs? (2800 words) [EHL1]**

- Gaps identified in the area relevant to the topic of this IPWG under your respective mandate
- Measures/interventions should be promoted to fill existing gaps and to assist Member States in scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation in relation to the topic of this theme.
- Concrete examples where ocean action is scaled up based on science and innovation

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In taking stock of progress towards achieving SDG 14.5 – the percentage of coastal and marine areas protected – it is important to be as accurate and comprehensive as possible. We note with concern that current accounting through the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) is largely based on country submissions, many of which do not meet international standards for MPAs – as defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Global conservation efforts are being undermined by accrediting protected areas that do not support the recovery of the ocean.

The current target to protect 10% of the ocean by 2020 (codified in Sustainable Development Goal 14.5 – and the CBDs Aichi Target 11), while a good start, is not sufficient. Scientific evidence suggests that to secure a healthy, productive, and resilient ocean, at least 30% of the world's ocean must be safeguarded in a network of well managed MPAs and Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs). It has been

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.oceanunite.org/issues/marine-plastic-pollution/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms4794>

shown that highly protected areas that do not allow industrial extraction such as bottom-trawling or deep-sea mining are most effective at restoring and protecting biodiversity.

In developing new SDGs it is important to note that weakly protecting 10 percent of coastal and marine areas could lead to weak protections in the future. This precedent must not be set. SDG 14.5 should be renewed and enhanced to protect and conserve at least 30% of the ocean in a network of MPAs and OECMs by 2030. All protected areas that count towards the target – including those already within the WDPA - should be shown to meet international standards.

#### **IV. Existing partnerships (1200 words)**

- Focus could be on scientific and technological innovation-based partnerships

In 2017, The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Bertarelli Foundation established a \$30 million partnership (the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project) to increase the number of highly and fully protected large scale marine protected areas around the world. Over the past three years, the partnership has assisted governments and other partners in safeguarding nearly 1.2 million sq. km. of marine habitat.

The Antarctic2020 Champions group is an international group of influencers from the world of sport, politics, business, media and science who are working together to build support for the single largest act of protection in the history of human-kind: the designation of a network of marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean. These influencers have been highlighting the need for a representative network of marine protected areas around Antarctica at numerous international forum, speaking with world leaders to promote greater ocean protections.

#### **V. Possible areas for new partnerships (1200 words)**<sup>[EHL2]</sup>

The Blue Nature Alliance is a partnership that brings together NGOs, governments, local communities, and the private sector to provide technical expertise and financial support to catalyze large-scale ocean conservation. The Alliance will engage with sites by *creating new areas* and *expanding, improving management* and or *upgrading protections* of existing areas in order to advance each site on their conservation journey. The Alliance will also support the field of large scale ocean conservation through investments in communities of practice, knowledge exchanges, and best practice development and sharing. These investments will create new science, tools, capacity, and innovations that advance and amplify the field of large-scale ocean conservation.

Recently Pew partnered with systems change consultants, SYSTEMIQ, to develop a global road map to bring down plastic leakage into the ocean to near zero by 2040. Our report, to be launched in June, models several scenarios of plastic use and interventions. We intend to launch our roadmap at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, in partnership with a diverse and wide range of stakeholders. In order to address the plastic pollution problem we need to work collectively on all fronts.

## **VI. Conclusions and recommendations (1000 words)**<sup>[EHL3]</sup>

The ocean is in dire need of help and the time to act is now. Protecting ocean health is essential to protecting human health and well-being. In 2019, the IPBES global assessment and the IPCC's Special Report on Ocean and Cryosphere emphasized the negative impacts climate change and other environmental degradation has on both the environment and human well-being. The UN Ocean Conference is an opportunity to elevate the ocean across this Super Year of 2020 meetings. Member States can commit to emphasizing ocean health at the IUCN WCC, the UN Biodiversity Conference, the UNFCCC, among others. Action must be taken to promote good ocean health to leverage success across all the SDGs.

## **VII. Key questions for the dialogue at the 2020 UN Ocean Conference (300 words)**

- What action will be taken to ensure the continued implementation, scale-up, and success of the SDG14 goals set to mature in 2020?