

UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE

Canada's Plenary Statement

Lisbon, Portugal

June 27, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Partners, friends and delegates....it's a privilege to be here today on behalf of the Government of Canada.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and are committed to a rules-based international order that delivers security, prosperity and freedom for its citizens.

The world is also at a pivotal moment when it comes to the health of our oceans and the marine life within them.

The sustainability of our oceans is front and centre on the global agenda. Our oceans play a major role in climate change, supporting coastal livelihoods and economies, and providing a growing demand for clean energy, low-carbon food, and other sustainable resources.

This unprecedented attention comes with the expectation that us as government leaders are taking concrete, coordinated and measurable actions to protect and restore them. And that we do so urgently.

In Canada, we're doing just that by leveraging public-private partnerships, science and Indigenous knowledge, as well as new and innovative technologies. We know it's critical to ensure our Indigenous partners, provinces and territories, industry stakeholders, environmental groups, and all Canadians have a role to play in safeguarding our natural ocean heritage. Taking this approach allows us to develop sustainable, inclusive and low-carbon ocean sectors. This work is also buoyed by strong political will,

a knowledge-based workforce and significant financial investments.

ACTIONS TO DATE

Canada recently extended our Oceans Protection Plan, which is making our oceans cleaner, healthier and safer.

This additional \$2 billion commitment follows the \$1.5 billion which has been invested since 2017. It also includes \$85 million to support aquatic ecosystem restoration in coastal and upstream inland communities.

An additional \$750 million has been set aside to support Canada's Global Innovation Clusters...including the Ocean Supercluster, which helps ocean-based industries

innovate to grow our blue economy in digital, sustainable and inclusive ways.

As part of our commitment to the Global Ocean Alliance, Canada is also making progress towards conserving 25 per cent of our oceans by 2025 and 30 per cent of our oceans by 2030. Last year, we set aside almost \$977 million to help meet our marine conservation targets. To date, Canada has protected nearly 15 per cent of our marine and coastal areas. This equates to more than 842,000 square kilometres – an area equivalent to more than one third of the Mediterranean Sea.

At the Summit of the Americas a few weeks ago, Canada was proud to co-sponsor the America Alliance for the Protection of the Ocean. This Chilean-led initiative will

establish a regional alliance that will help coordinate marine protected areas and other marine conservation measures in the Pacific ocean....work that will strengthen ocean conservation and benefit local and migratory species.

When it comes to addressing ocean plastics, Canada continues to lead the charge. Just last week we announced a comprehensive plan to ban harmful single-use plastics, which will come into effect at the end of this year.

In addition, we're working with signatories to the Ocean Plastics Charter to deliver four key initiatives under the \$100 million Marine Litter Mitigation Fund.

Approximately \$70 million has already been disbursed with the remaining \$30 million to soon follow.

Canada is also tackling abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, which is one of the leading causes of plastic debris in the marine environment. Since 2020, almost 1,300 tonnes of ghost gear has been removed from Canadian waters through the Canadian Ghost Gear Fund, to put that into Canadian terms, that is almost 500 zambonis. An additional \$10 million will help coastal and Indigenous communities remove and recycle more of this harmful fishing gear in the year ahead.

As a member of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, Prime Minister Trudeau has affirmed our country's commitment to protecting and restoring the health of the global ocean, and to building a sustainable ocean economy that can feed a hungry planet, empower

coastal communities, power our cities, transport people and goods, and provide innovative solutions to global challenges. To this end, I'm leading Canada's whole-of-government effort to build our blue economy in ways that are sustainable, prosperous and inclusive.

CANADA'S OCEAN COMMITMENTS

It gives me great pleasure to announce over 20 new voluntary commitments as part of this UN Ocean conference. This includes:

- \$1.7 million for a partnership with OceanMind to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in developing countries.
- Extending Canada's Dark Vessel Detection Platform to support Ecuador's efforts to address IUU fishing around the Galapagos Islands; and
- The establishment of the Eastern Canyons Marine Refuge off of Canada's East Coast.

CONCLUSION

Before closing, I want to take this opportunity to invite the ocean community to IMPAC5, the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress that's taking place in Vancouver, Canada in February 2023.

Canada looks forward to hosting this global forum,
alongside the three Host First Nations – Musqueam,
Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh – as it will bring together
ocean conservation experts and high-level officials to
inform, inspire and act on marine protected areas.

Thank you.