

UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

Interactive Dialogue **“Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems”**

28 June 2022

15:00 - 18:00

Thank you Mr/Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all here present recognize how important healthy and resilient marine and coastal ecosystems are for sustainable development.

The ocean is under threat. Pollution, ecosystem degradation, acidification, overfishing, and overexploitation of the seabed are jeopardizing its sustainability.

If we want our oceans and seas to be and remain healthy, our ambition needs to be high and protection stepped up significantly.

This will provide multiple benefits across different policies, contributing to biodiversity protection, food security and carbon storage.

We know from scientific assessments of the state of the marine environment that set up goals have not yet been accomplished.

That is why we need operational approaches, cross-sectoral coordination and multilevel cooperation. Our joint work should be guided by a harmonized vision for the state of oceans and seas.

We need ecosystem-based management across sectors with good legislative solutions easily applicable to different scales in the ocean realm.

International agenda for the ocean and seas has set major milestones to be achieved this year, namely the new High Seas Treaty for conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction as well as the adoption of the new ambitious Global Biodiversity Framework under the CBD convention.

It is also important to secure the establishment of additional marine protected areas within national jurisdiction as well as to strengthen their overall management.

That is why Croatia, as many countries here today, is part of an ambitious group of countries gathered in various alliances and coalitions calling for urgent action to save the global ocean.

To demonstrate our dedication, Croatia intends to contribute to the global goal of ocean protection by setting an example of having 30% of the sea within national jurisdiction under protection by 2030.

Our work now is aimed at acquiring the best available data on marine environment to serve as a scientific basis for the 30 percent target.

In our contribution, we intend to include areas that clearly benefit across sectors. We are not starting from scratch, we already have excellent examples of effective spatial solutions that contribute both to marine biodiversity and recovery of demersal fishing resources and ecosystems in the Adriatic, one of them being the permanent Fisheries Restricted Area (FRA) Jabuka/Fossa di Pomo.

This has been recognized at the regional level as a good example of transboundary proclamation and successful cooperation. In addition, it has been scientifically proven an adequate protection mechanism.

These seemingly conflicting interests, through Nature-based solutions such as Marine Protected Areas and Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management are moving conservation practice towards integrated solutions with the biodiversity and fishery sectors.