

***Minimizing and addressing ocean acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming  
- Input by Iceland***

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is having a profound impact in big parts of the world. But without the oceans, things would be much worse.

The seas absorb a quarter of humankind's carbon emissions, as well as most of the excess heat caused by them in the atmosphere. Otherwise, we would be toast – almost literally. But this service comes at a cost. Marine heatwaves have doubled in frequency. The uptake of carbon leads to ocean acidification.

Much of the damage is invisible to us. But it is there, and it is serious. In the past, major mass extinctions have happened when seas turned acid. Acidification is a silent mass killer of marine life, which we must confront.

Threats to marine ecosystems are a threat to us. Acidification could negatively affect cod and other fish stocks in the North Atlantic later this century, according to science. The same goes with living marine resources elsewhere. Blue food is an important source of protein and sustenance for billions of people. Acidification puts our marine food supply in peril.

Some of the longest continuous records of acidification are from Icelandic waters; and they show a worrying trend. The Government of Iceland recently strengthened research efforts on how acidification affects marine ecosystems. There is still much we do not know; but we know enough to see that we must act.

So, what can we do? Adaptation is important. Even more so is mitigation; to prevent further damage. How? Let me mention two key actions.

First, nature-based solutions. On land, Iceland aims to reclaim lost woodlands and drained wetlands. We should look for similar opportunities in the sea. However, we need good

science and robust accounting to back up Blue Carbon mitigation schemes. Iceland welcomes the work of the IPCC in this regard, and calls for further guidance from science.

Second, we simply need to cut carbon emissions – from marine sources and from all sources.

We have promising clean energy solutions for ships; we need to speed them up. We need to confront IUU fisheries and abolish subsidies of fossil fuels for fisheries – and of course, fossil fuel subsidies in general. We should not hand out money to help fouling our seas and cooking the Earth.

Just as we need to turn off the plastic-waste-tap to stop pollution, we need to turn off the carbon-emissions-tap to halt ocean acidification. To save our seas we need to change our ways; above all, by moving away from fossil fuels to clean and renewable energy, as soon as possible.

Thank you,