



## OCEANA STATEMENT TO THE 2022 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

Overfishing, pollution, and climate change have left our oceans in crisis. The 2022 UN Ocean Conference must deliver a series of concrete actions ahead of what is a critical decade for the health of our oceans and our own survival. **Oceana urges leaders from across politics, business, science, civil society, and philanthropy to take concerted international action to:**

**1) Protect at least 30% of the ocean by 2030.** This is in line with science and recommendations from the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Without effective management, designated Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) remain mere 'paper parks' that provide little to no actual protection. To be effective, management plans need to include clear conservation objectives; concrete deadlines for implementing measures that address the threats and activities that affect the site's ecological integrity (like destructive fishing); appropriate monitoring; and sufficient financial resources to support management and surveillance of MPAs.

**2) Increase fisheries transparency to tackle illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.** The remote nature of fishing activities and the ease with which vessels can change identities and locations undermine attempts to monitor fishing activities and hold vessels and their owners accountable. The challenges in uncovering a vessel's activities present critical obstacles to stop IUU fishing. Increasing transparency in the global fishing sector will be transformational, exposing those who seek to avoid fisheries laws, while also providing a cost-effective enforcement and surveillance model. Global transparency policies underpin effective governance, whether it is the use of innovative technologies to gather and share data on catches, making information accessible for more equitable decision making, or leveraging open data to push governments toward more sustainable practices. A fundamental shift toward transparency in fisheries governance is critical to the future of our oceans.

**3) Stop plastic from entering the ocean by reducing the production of single-use plastic.** Plastics are responsible for at least 4.5% of greenhouse gas emissions and as plastic continues to flood into our oceans, its impact on marine and human life becomes increasingly damaging. Recycling alone will not solve the plastics crisis. Projections show plastic production tripling by 2050, far outpacing recycling and resulting in more plastic in the ocean, while the use of fossil resources to produce plastics further exacerbates the climate crisis. Governments must enact strong policies to dramatically reduce the production of single-use plastic and require companies to provide consumers with reusable or refillable, plastic-free options for their products.

**4) End overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks to preserve livelihoods.** Aquatic blue foods are critical to achieving SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger) and 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). More than 3 billion people rely on seafood for a substantial portion of their animal-sourced protein.

Governments must put an end to overfishing and the subsidies that enable it. Priority should be given to rebuilding overfished stocks that artisanal fishers rely on as a key source of food and income, and ensuring that benefits are returned to these local communities. Additionally, preserving inshore areas for preferential access for small-scale fishers will help reduce the threat of overfishing from industrial vessels and ensure that the value chain incorporates local actors.

**5) Embrace ocean solutions to help address the climate crisis.** The ocean plays a critical role in combatting climate change: it has absorbed 93% of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions since the 1970s. By 2050, ocean-based solutions could address 21% of the emissions gap needed to stay within the 2°C limit. Meanwhile, it is vital that we restore and maintain healthy ocean ecosystems to improve their resilience in the face of climate change. Effectively protecting marine areas and managing fish stocks are essential if the ocean is to continue buffering us from the worst impacts of a warming climate. Increasing seabed protection against physical damage is also essential to preserve carbon storage by ocean seafloor sediments – the largest carbon reservoir on the planet.

By protecting our oceans, we can help ensure the long-term sustainability of a nutrient-rich protein source, stop the expansion of the dirty offshore drilling, protect habitats that store carbon, and maintain the livelihoods of coastal communities who are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis.



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