

The European Marine Board would like to thank the Governments of Kenya and Portugal for co-hosting this Conference. As the leading European marine science policy think-tank, we re-iterate the importance of marine scientific knowledge to achieve all the SDGs.

Globally there are insufficient Ocean observations, and existing observations are unevenly distributed between the north and south, and between different habitats. There is a lack of sustained funding for Ocean observations, exacerbated by the lack of international coordination within and between States and in ABNJ.

Observations should be planned at sea basin level, distributed among States based on ability, and recognized as enabling infrastructure, generating global public-good data supporting sustainable development. They should not depend on research funding, as this is an international safety, food security, and climate change risk reduction issue.

EMB supports the open sharing and dissemination of data and knowledge resulting from observations and research. However, open science should be equitable and academic publishing business models should allow inclusion of developing States' scientists.

The EMB's flagship publication NFV, which describes the marine science needed for a sustainable future beyond 2030, highlights the critical knowledge gaps in temporal and spatial Ocean connectivity; interactions between- and impact of- multiple stressors, climate-related extreme events and geohazards; and advancements needed in Ocean technology, modelling, and AI to understand, predict, and manage the impact of human activities. It recommends the adoption of solutions-oriented, transdisciplinary marine research agendas, co-designed with all stakeholders, and with the governance of sustainability at their core.

However, it takes time to build trust and mutual understanding among transdisciplinary research teams. This should be enabled through training and sharing of best practices, as highlighted in the European Union's IOG Forum.

We should consider new ways to communicate to ensure everyone can engage with the SDGs. Ocean and Human Health is one way to do that: aiming to understand the complex links between the health of the Ocean and that of humans.

Humans are inextricably linked to the Ocean: we rely on a healthy Ocean for a sustainable future. The interconnected nature of key societal challenges requires a holistic, systems approach to science, management, and policy. Ocean knowledge should take a central role in planning for a sustainable future including understanding and managing the water system; weather- and climate systems; biodiversity; and the links between the Ocean and human societies, economy, health, and wellbeing.

UN Ocean Conference Contribution

Johanna J Heymans (Sheila)

Executive Director