



## **2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event**

### ***Quality Matters: Enhancing Governance, Effective Management and Resilience of Marine Protected Areas for Multiple Co-benefits***

1 July 2022, 11:30 – 12:45, Altice Arena, Conference Venue, Side Event Room 1

Organized by: Government of Ecuador, Charles Darwin Foundation, Re:wild, Jocotoco Foundation, Marine Conservation Institute, The Nature Conservancy, United Nations Environment Programme

#### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

Scientific evidence suggests that a minimum of 30% of the global ocean must be protected and conserved to safeguard marine biodiversity. With over 17,000 MPAs, global coverage is now just 8%. Even more concerning is that only 2.4% of the ocean is currently in fully and highly protected areas with strong enough regulations to deliver significant conservation benefits (MPAtlas.org, 2022). If we are to protect and restore ocean and coastal ecosystem services and revitalize ocean systems and secure our current livelihoods and humanity's future, we must improve the quality of MPAs design and implementation in parallel to accelerating MPA coverage.

#### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- The Nature Conservancy and United Nations Environment Program moderated the event, and highlighted the critical importance of ensuring quality MPAs by enhancing governance, effective management, and climate resilience in MPAs. They discussed the importance of effective management as foundational to achieving 30x30 commitments within broader ocean management systems and how new innovative tools and learning resources under development by TNC and UNEP will support marine planners and practitioners to deliver quality MPAs.
- The Government of Ecuador and partners presented progress on the implementation of the newly designated “Hermandad” Marine Reserve, adjacent to the Galapagos Marine Reserve, and its complementarity and connection with the MPAs of Galapagos and Cocos

Island in Costa Rica, as well as ongoing efforts to preserve and strengthen ecological connectivity and marine conservation in the Eastern Tropical Pacific region.

- The Charles Darwin Foundation explained the success of the Galapagos Marine Reserve as a management tool which has enabled a spillover effect for key species, which the new reserve, Hermandad, is expected to enhance. Hermandad connects Galapagos and Cocos Island and is the first step in a larger regional initiative to create a transboundary marine corridor (known as CMAR) connecting core Marine Protected Areas in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Panama. This will not only protect key migratory species but will also help to regulate our climate by absorbing carbon dioxide emissions.
- Marine Conservation Institute announced the prestigious Blue Park Awards celebrating outstanding marine wildlife conservation. The 2022 Blue Park Award recipients represented MPAs in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Colombia that met science-based standards for conservation effectiveness, as determined by an international council of leading marine conservation scientists.
- A panel discussion involving questions from the audience and the speakers focused on the significant roles that communities, cross-sector collaborations, and sustained funding play in effective MPAs.

#### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- Decision support tools and guidance are needed to provide marine protected area planners and managers with good practices on sustainable financing, climate change effects and strategies for improving management effectiveness and developing sustainable livelihoods.
- Ensuring effective MPAs requires collaboration across sectors including government, NGOs, communities, the market and the private sector.
- The success of 30x30 commitments to conserve marine ecosystem health relies on implementing effective and sustainable protection, not just designating new MPAs.
- Implementing and sustaining effective MPAs requires sustainable financial mechanisms and political will.
- Bridging the ‘science-policy’ gap is critical to achieve informed decisions and policies necessary for successful MPAs governance.