



**International
Science Council**

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The transformative capacity of ocean networks is increasingly necessary but also untapped in its full potential. Partnerships drive many marine research and policy initiatives worldwide, yet are often afterthoughts or remain volunteer efforts due to a lack of committed resources.

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development represents a global movement to change co-creation and sharing of knowledge. We need new ways of creating self-organizing, bottom-up learning and impact networks. Ocean actors need to be able to find each other. Experiences and potential solutions need to be shared openly in near-real time, unimpeded by language or technology barriers. We need to break free from top-down, hierarchical systems to enable the co-creation of ocean knowledge by self-organizing networks and communities.

It is also critical to use this knowledge to inform policy. The IPCC and IPBES provide consensus-based narratives on climate and biodiversity respectively. A new international panel for ocean science is the next logical step in the evolution of consensus-driven scientific assessments, and can mobilize action by bridging science and policy. An International Panel for Ocean Sustainability (IPOS) will amplify SDG14 and further elevate the ocean in the global agenda.

A major question remains: how to engage ocean citizens' knowledge to bridge the divide between visions of the "Blue Economy" and "Blue Justice."

Small-scale fishers' (SSF) major contributions to livelihoods, food security, and revenue contrast with their marginalization in decision-making. To ensure healthy and resilient fishing communities that protect the ocean and coasts, SSF requires secure access to healthy ecosystems. Many SSF groups attending this Conference have long produced knowledge about social struggles while advancing a human-rights-based approach to conservation. I urge you to join and support their work on the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture and consider their Call to Action, launched on Tuesday.

We provide five key recommendations:

1. Support networked knowledge-to-action through enabling long-term transdisciplinary programs.
2. Promote the importance of understanding the past of ocean ecosystems for socially equitable and environmentally sustainable ocean-based development.
3. Highlight the importance of co-creation of knowledge and solutions with ocean citizens.
4. Support the creation of an International Panel for Ocean Sustainability.
5. In a UNOC Political Declaration, support Blue Justice by centering social equity at the heart of blue economy innovations with a stand-alone article supporting small-scale fisheries more boldly.

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