UN Ocean Conference, Lisbon

Plenary Intervention 30th June 2022 – National Oceanography Centre

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The UK's National Oceanography Centre is one of the world's leading centres of ocean expertise including for the 60% of the ocean beyond national jurisdictions.

The aim of this conference is to propel science-based innovative solutions to deliver truly global ocean action concerning the interconnected issues of climate, biodiversity and developing a sustainable knowledge-based ocean economy.

Scientific knowledge and rigour are the foundations for informing solutions. That is why we call for action in four areas – to promote, research, observe and protect.

- First - **promote** - the critical role the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus – the threats and the solutions.

- Second – **marine scientific research** – 'the science we need for the ocean we want' as in the vision of the UN Decade of Ocean Science. For example, in a world striving for answers, we need scientific rigour and integrity to properly appraise of the potential of nature-based solutions, to quantify the size of blue carbon stores and rates of net carbon sequestration possible.

- Third - **observe** – commitment to scaling-up and sustaining a globally distributed, surface and underwater, ocean sensing network, monitoring essential ocean variables all-day, every-day. This is not a passive endeavour, divorced from action. Rather, it is the beginning of understanding of where and how to act and how to evaluate the impacts of actions. The present global ocean sensing system is too reliant on short-term research funding. It needs to be treated as the foundation of a globally-shared information infrastructure and governed, funded, and operated sustainably, with different stakeholders, including research funding agencies, working together not independently. If the international space station had been built like the global ocean observing system it would still be in pieces on the ground! This must change.

- Finally - to **protect**. By 2050 over 1 billion people will live in low-lying coastal areas. We specifically need to see investment in the upgrading of the global network of coastal and island sea level gauges to give accurate information not available from satellites alone - for monitoring long-term sea-level trends, extremes and improving multi-hazard warning systems. Climate change impacts us all, and rising seas have the power to destroy whole communities across the globe.

By working globally, united in a common endeavour, informed by the best science, committed to systematically and continuously gathering and sharing the data needed to inform actions - and focused on short, medium, and long-term goals, we can deliver positive and informed change.