2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Ocean of Solutions to Tackle Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss

Thursday 30 July, 18:15-19:45, Maritime Museum of Lisboa

Leading organisations: Government of FRANCE and Ocean & Climate Platform

Partner organisations: Maritime Museum of Lisbon; CNRS; Institut Océanographique Paul Ricard; IFAW; The Ocean Foundation; Blue Seeds; Mercator Ocean International; Ocean University Initiative - Université de Bretagne Occidentale (UBO); International Partnership on MPAs, Biodiversity and Climate Change; French Biodiversity Agency (OFB); IOC-UNESCO; Sulubaaï Foundation; IRD; Ifremer

Background on the event

At the crossroads of all challenges facing humanity today, the ocean is **fundamental to the sustainable world we must build** as it ensures food security, human well-being, the energy transition, a fruitful economy, healthy marine ecosystems and a protected climate. Addressing the decline in ocean health is therefore crucial to **maintaining its ability to sustain all life** on Earth. Around the globe and across sectors, **ocean-based solutions are being developed to mitigate and adapt to climate change**. Throughout this side-event, world experts - scientists, NGOs, international organisations, private sector representatives - showcased ambitious ocean-based initiatives (e.g., nature-based solutions, community-based management, MPAs, blue finance, blue shipping, ocean forecast) that are accessible, reliable, scalable and sustainable. **Powerful source of untapped solutions**, the ocean greatly contributes to the 2030 Agenda, providing opportunities to draw a sustainable path between protection and production based on the best available science. In that regard, **SDG 14 "Life Below Water"** sets out a global plan to restore respect and balance to humanity's relationship with the ocean.

Key Issues discussed

- **Ocean science** is an integral part of addressing the adverse impacts of climate change, the loss of marine life and the degradation of marine and coastal habitats by delivering timely information about the state of the ocean. Effective ocean action requires sound knowledge and the latest available science to ensure a sustainable future.

- **Blue carbon ecosystems**, with their high carbon sequestration and storage capacity, have the potential to significantly contribute to mitigation efforts. They also will greatly contribute to adaptation needs, given that healthy and intact coastal ecosystems can protect coastal communities from increasing climate impacts (i.e. extreme weather events, coastal erosion and sea level rise) and improve local livelihoods.
- Despite their importance to the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems, **coastal communities and indigenous peoples** continue to be overlooked in critical decision making. But where local people actively participate in the management of coastal resources, this management has been shown to be significantly more effective.
- The **financial sector** still hardly integrates challenges induced by climate change and marine biodiversity erosion. Only a **massive increase in financial resources** mindful of climate and marine biodiversity considerations, will allow us to prepare our economies' low-carbon pathways by 2050 for a just and inclusive transition, and to facilitate the development of marine ecosystems protection and restoration projects.
- Civil society actors are joining forces, sending governments a resounding signal that businesses, NGOS, cities, regions and investors are united to a **decarbonised economy** that is respectful of Nature. They play a key role in developing solutions to ensure the implementation of sustainable practices in all ocean-based industries that impact the ocean and the coasts (e.g., shipping, fishing, tourism, ocean energy).

Key recommendations for action

- Achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to well below 2°C and aiming for 1.5°C will require a drastic increase of ambition and action, both on the **urgent reductions in GHG emissions** that we need — including from sea-based industries — and on **protecting as many carbon sinks as possible**.
- If we are to succeed in addressing the decline in ocean health, we must learn to live in harmony with Nature while urgently implementing measures to speed up the transition towards sustainable societies and territories. The ideal way forward is now to prioritise actions allowing us to reach ocean, biodiversity and climate objectives at once, that is to say **climate-smart and biodiversity positive plans**.
- Building on the global recognition that a healthy and productive ocean is a key source of solutions both for climate mitigation and adaptation, **rigorous and immediate action** needs to be scaled-up to preserve marine ecosystems, ensure resilient aquatic food production and support adaptation and resilience-building for coastal communities.
- A sustainably and equitably-managed ocean is recognised as the necessary condition to create the **enabling environment** to accelerate the implementation of ocean-based climate solutions for a **net-zero and resilient world**.
- It is now time to implement the necessary conditions for increased action, and in particular the **scaling-up of research** within the ocean-climate nexus, **and public and private funding for ocean-based climate solutions**, in line with the objectives of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).