



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

### ***[Research and Innovation as Key Pillars of a Regenerative Development of the Red Sea]***

[Tuesday 28th June 20, 2022, 18:00, Parque das Nações, south side of Altice Arena]

Organized by: Saudi Arabia, [NCW (Saudi National Center for Wildlife), The Red Sea Development Company, AMAALA, NEOM, KAUST (King Abdullah University of Science and Technology)]

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

We highlighted a new paradigm of “regenerative development” emerging from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Regenerative Development shifts the role of development from one of a vector of impact and loss of marine life as practices in the 1970’s where many of the world’s shorelines were developed, to one that propels marine conservation, protection and aims at rebuilding marine life. This paradigm is emerging in the Red Sea, which is a global hotspot of marine biodiversity and a unique marine environment along the Saudi coasts. Thus, such marine environment requires a regenerative development to be used sustainably for the benefits of the current and future generations. We highlighted how transdisciplinary efforts in research and innovation, extending from marine biodiversity research through the development of a biodiversity baseline for the Red Sea under the Red Sea Decade Expedition to governance and institutional development, is setting the foundations for a net positive biodiversity impact in the Red Sea, through development, and how this model for SDG14 action can be shared and extended elsewhere. The side event had contributions from multiple government units, the research and private sectors, as well as international thought and research leaders.

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

- Achieving 30% of Saudi exclusive economic zone (EEZ) protected by 2030.
- Saudi Arabia initiative towards marine plastic littering

- Fisheries and agriculture development in Saudi Arabia.
- The role of the private sector in the regenerative development of the Red Sea
- Red Sea decade expedition 2022
- The role of science and innovation in enabling regenerative development of the Red Sea.
- The role of partnerships in driving positive action in the marine environment toward UN SDG 14

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

- Remove pressures on marine environment through local and global action.
- Promote partnerships to implement the contribution of marine environment to achieve SDG Goal 14
- Enhance coral reef conservation and restoration, as it plays a key ecological role for the coastal ecosystem's protection
- Prevent and reduce pollution of the marine environment, especially plastic and microplastic litter.
- Improve a technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer and innovation relevant to marine environment.
- Protect marine biodiversity to drive net-positive impacts for eco-tourism.

