



Eco Foundation Global's Statement

Marine and coastal ecosystems are interlinked. Countries need to cooperate globally for their conservation; success depends not on how the best do, but the worst. The challenge is to balance economic recovery with ecosystem conservation, including restoration.

Coasts are home to 50% of the world population, generating 70% of world GDP.

The challenges facing our oceans, life below water, are so great that there has been a tendency to overlook the coastal ecosystems of the shared margins of the land and sea. These are especially threatened due to pressures coming from both above and below the precious intertidal area and ecologically associated habitats, and from exceptionally fragmented governance. The high threat status of migratory species that depend on these coastal ecosystems are an indicator of the loss of ecosystem services that we are suffering due to unsustainable management of the coasts.

A significant acceleration of action to conserve coastal ecosystems is needed if we are to meet related biodiversity, climate change and other sustainable development goals, and capitalise on the nature-based solutions, including disaster risk reduction in the face of sea level rise and other climate change effects, as well as the many other ecosystem services they provide.

Furthermore, in many cases the life in the ocean begins on the coasts.

In recognition of this, recent resolutions of the Convention on Migratory Species (2017), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (2018), Convention on Biological Diversity (2018) and IUCN (2020) have all called for the establishment of a multistakeholder global coastal forum. This is apparently the first time that all these bodies have called for a common mechanism to facilitate synergistic implementation of international commitments made under them.

Accordingly, in a process enabled by the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Peoples Republic of China, a World Coastal Forum Establishment Group was launched at the start of the year when they are chairing both the CBD COP15 and Ramsar COP14. It is coordinated by Eco-Foundation Global and BirdLife International, with participation of some 20 key stakeholder international organisations. The aim is to launch the World Coastal Forum (WCF) on the occasion of Ramsar COP14 in November 2022.

This new, voluntary partnership aims to advance implementation of SDG 14 with regards to protecting, managing and restoring coastal ecosystems.

The WCF is proposed to be independent of the treaties but focussed on facilitating, catalysing and promoting synergistic, concerted, cooperative, coordinated evidence-based priority actions to implement transformational change to protect, manage and restore coastal ecosystems, including as nature-based solutions and for provision of ecosystem services to multiple stakeholders, in line with commitments made under the treaties and in line with the green recovery and aspiration to build back better.

There will be an emphasis on encouraging scaling up to global level what has been shown to work at local level, while sharing knowledge from global to local level to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of action.

The WCF will:

- Collect, synthesise and disseminate **evidence** and information, including international best practices for the conservation, management and restoration of coastal ecosystems.
- Support **capacity building** including through mentoring, exchange visits, site twinning and networks of demonstration sites, with a focus on developing countries.
- Enhance **communication, education and public awareness**, including youth engagement, on the value and conservation of coastal ecosystems.
- Work in synergy with the various existing international initiatives including those of the global conventions.

Potential World Coastal Forum priorities for facilitating a more sustainable future for our coastal ecosystems and the biodiversity and human livelihoods and wellbeing that depend on them include the following:

- a. **Protection:** through regional/global reviews, identify networks of potential coastal ecosystem World Heritage and/or Ramsar sites complemented by Other Area-based Ecosystem Conservation Measures (OECMS) to deliver ecological connectivity, and support their inscription/designation.
- b. **Sustainable Management:** develop evidence-based global guidance on wise use management of working coastal ecosystems such as shellfisheries and aquaculture, for people and wild species, including but not limited to waterbirds
- c. **Ecosystem restoration:** facilitate coastal wetland restoration by:
 - i. supporting national prioritisation of sites for restoration
 - ii. provision of tools to support evidence and nature based coastal wetland ecosystems restoration.

For further information and to participate see www.WorldCoastalForum.org

Sincerely,



Zhang Hai

Secretary General