



— UNITED NATIONS —
OCEAN
CONFERENCE

LISBON
27 JUNE -
1 JULY
2022

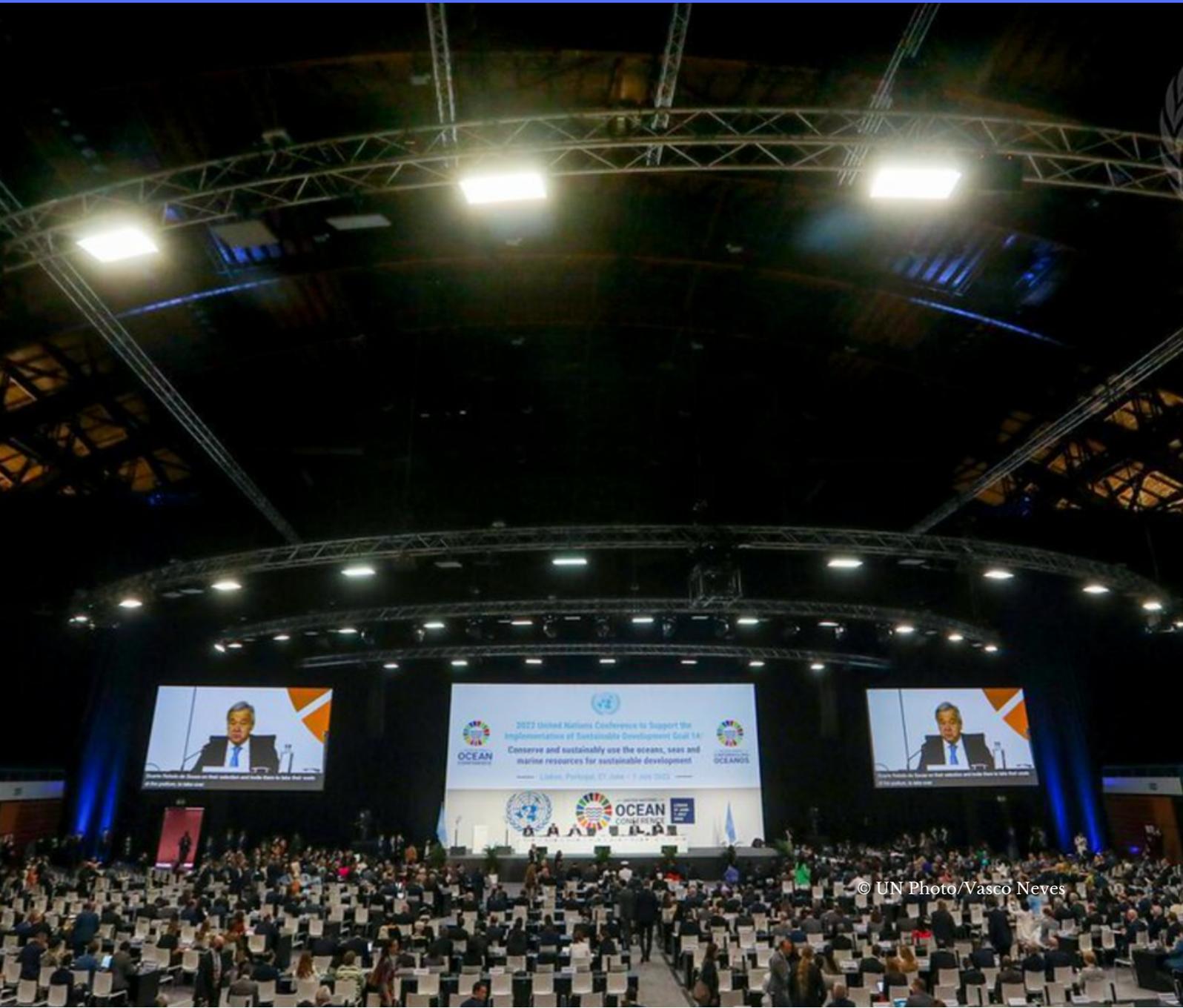


**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

JULY 2022 | VOL. 21

OCEAN ACTION NEWSLETTER: --- **THE 2022 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE**



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CONTENTS

- 3** INTRODUCTION
- 4** MESSAGE FROM H.E. ANA PAULA ZACARIAS, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AND H.E. MARTIN KIMANI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
- 5** MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE OCEAN
- 7** SPECIAL EVENTS AND SIDE EVENTS
- 11** VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT
- 15** UPDATES FROM COMMUNITIES OF OCEAN ACTION

COMMUNITIES OF OCEAN ACTION: CORAL REEFS
- 17** COMMUNITIES OF OCEAN ACTION: OCEAN ACIDIFICATION
- 20** COMMUNITIES OF OCEAN ACTION: SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES



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INTRODUCTION

The 2022 UN Ocean Conference, which was co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal, took place on 27 June-1 July in Lisbon, Portugal, under the theme “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of SDG 14: Stocktaking, partnerships and solutions.”

The Conference featured plenary sessions, four special events, over 300 side events, an SDG Media Zone, exhibits, as well as eight interactive dialogues on:

- marine pollution;
- strengthening ocean-based economies;
- managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems;
- minimizing and addressing ocean acidification, deoxygenation, and ocean warming;
- making fisheries sustainable and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets;
- increasing scientific knowledge and developing research capacity and transfer of marine technology;
- enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- leveraging interlinkages between SDG 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Conference resulted in the adoption of the political declaration “Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility” ([A/CONF.230/2022/L.1](#)). In addition, in connection with the Conference, participants announced over 300 voluntary commitments in support of SDG 14, with approximately 50 high-level commitments and pledges, ranging from protecting marine areas and investing in ocean renewable energies to banning single use plastics and supporting enhanced scientific cooperation.

As we are counting down to the next UN Ocean Conference, which France and Costa Rica have offered to host in 2025, we invite everyone to take ocean action and to register new and existing voluntary commitments to save the ocean for people and the planet.

MESSAGE FROM H.E. ANA PAULA ZACARIAS, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AND H.E. MARTIN KIMANI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Nearly five years ago, Portugal and Kenya offered to co-host the second United Nations Ocean Conference to accelerate efforts to support the implementation of SDG 14. With the invaluable assistance of the United Nations and multiple international stakeholders, we sought to set up the Conference as a transformative moment for the Ocean – one where tangible, ambitious, collective action based on science and innovation would be generated in support of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

With more than 6,000 participants, including 24 Heads of State and Government, 120 ministers, and over 2,000 representatives of civil society, we are delighted to acknowledge that the international community responded positively to our call, and that the UN Ocean Conference achieved what we intended. Close to 300 voluntary commitments were registered, adding to the substantial commitments made at the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, focusing on areas such as the creation and management of marine protected areas, addressing of marine plastic pollution, cooperation on science and innovation, as well as projects on climate action and resilience. Furthermore, an ambitious, action-oriented political declaration was adopted by consensus, setting a concrete roadmap for the years ahead.

However, our work does not stop here. We need to do more, faster, more effectively and in a more coordinated manner if we want to save the ocean for present and future generations. As always, you can count on Portugal and Kenya to continue leading the way on ocean action and promoting collective efforts in support of the implementation of Goal 14 and the 2030 Agenda as a whole.



MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE OCEAN

"Everything is connected. From chemical and plastic pollution, to overfishing, habitat loss, ocean warming, death of coral and rising sea levels – all have the same anthropogenic origins, arising from our long record of flagrant disrespect for Nature and everything it provides. It is time to reset the balance and give Nature the respect that is its due, at the very deepest of levels."

Ambassador Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean

The 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference took place from 27 June to 1 July in Lisbon, Portugal. Like its 2017 predecessor, the Lisbon Conference was the jewel in the crown of a super year for the ocean. It convened many thousands of people from all over the world, all determined to support the implementation of SDG 14, build the Sustainable Blue Economy and stop the decline in the ocean's health.

The Conference's daily programme was packed – from a week of plenary speeches by heads of state and government, ministers and other leaders from the public and private sector, to the eight heavily attended Interactive Dialogues, to streams of side events, and hundreds of press briefings, interviews and panels in the SDG Media Zone and other media venues.



I was delighted to be a speaker at some forty of these events, talking on such subjects as marine pollution, coral reef preservation, enhancing the place of aquatic foods, funding the sustainable blue economy, and acting upon the ocean-climate change nexus.

I was privileged to attend all four Special Events organized by the Conference co-hosts, the governments of Kenya and Portugal, all of which were addressed and attended by high-level global participants. The Localizing Action event in Matosinhos, the Water Symposium (bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14) held in Lisbon, the Sustainable Blue Economy and Investment Forum held in Cascais, and the Youth and Innovation Forum held in Carçavelos, were all judged to be outstanding successes. Another event that stood out at the Conference was the Food and Agricultural Organization's launch of the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 (SOFIA) report.

Participating in person at the Youth and Innovation Forum at Carçavelos, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres pledged that youth should no longer have to be satisfied with meeting at the edge of conferences and that henceforth they must have a seat at the negotiating tables affecting their futures. The logic of suitably qualified young people taking their place at international negotiating tables, relevant to their specialties, is as logical as it is compelling.

The conference concluded on 1 July 2022 with the adoption by consensus of a political declaration titled “Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility”, by which Member States declared their determination to act decisively and urgently to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems.

My daily mantra is “No healthy Planet without a healthy Ocean, and the Ocean’s health is currently in decline.” We can stop the decline if we hold firm to the spirit of multilateralism, grasping the nettle of consensus at the great confluence of environmental conferences occurring in 2022.

We did so in Nairobi in the UN Environment Assembly at the beginning of the year, with agreement to negotiate an internationally binding treaty to combat plastic pollution. We did so in Geneva with the World Trade Organization Ministerial Council’s agreement to ban harmful fisheries subsidies. And then we did so in Lisbon at the UN Ocean Conference, with the launching of a great fleet of solutions in support of SDG 14’s goal of conserving and sustainably using the Ocean’s resources.

Now we must conclude negotiations at the UN in New York on an ambitiously operable High Seas Treaty, so that governance of the great ocean commons is instituted for the good of all. And at the UN Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh in November we expect to see evidence of the necessary funds being produced, particularly for developing countries to finance their adaptation plans. And finally in Montreal, come December, let us equip the world with the Convention’s on Biological Diversity targets that are ambitious enough to halt the biodiversity loss haunting the health of land, sea and ultimately ourselves.

Over the next three years, I look forward to working with Member States, the UN System, NGOs and the private sector, as we make the very best of France and Costa Rica’s generous offer to co-host the next UN Ocean Conference in France in 2025. Guided by the findings of the UN Decade of Ocean Science and bolstered by increasing funding in support of the Sustainable Blue Economy, I am confident we will keep faith with the targets of SDG 14 and be ready for transformational action in 2025.

You are invited to follow the Special Envoy’s [Twitter](#), where he shares messages of solutions and strategies for achieving a healthy Ocean through implementation of the SDG 14 and fidelity to the Paris Climate Agreement. More information about his work can be found on his [website](#).

SPECIAL EVENTS AND SIDE EVENTS

Youth and Innovation Forum | Special Event | 24-26 June 2022, Cascais

From 24 to 26 June 2022, more than 130 youth delegates from around the world gathered on Carcavelos Beach in Cascais, Portugal, united at the Youth and Innovation Forum by a single goal: to restore the ocean. The event was co-hosted by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya and organized by UN Global Compact Ocean Stewardship Coalition and Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA), in cooperation with CEiiA, the Municipality of Cascais, Nova School of Business and Economics, and supported by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).



©UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Over the course of 24 intense hours at the Innovathon, youth delegates worked together in small groups to create dozens of new solutions that tackle five major challenges facing the ocean. Two teams stood out and received USD 15,000 microgrants to help bring their solutions to life, including Team Waste Vengers, which addresses the tonnage of plastic waste in coastal communities in Malaysia by transforming plastic into eco-friendly construction beams, and Team INVASEA, which connects local communities with scientists and businesses, using invasive species to create marketable products such as seaweed-based bioplastics and fertilizers, driving the recovery of coastal ecosystems by restoring native species. SOA announced the commitment to raise USD 100 million to restore the health of the ocean and revealed that USD 15 million has been raised in their last round of fundraising.

More information about the event is available [here](#).

Localizing Action for the Ocean: Local and Regional Governments | Special Event | 25 June 2022, Matosinhos

On 25 June 2022, the Governments of Portugal and Kenya, together with the City of Matosinhos, hosted a special event on Localizing Action for the Ocean: Local and Regional Governments. The event brought together representatives of local and regional governments from around the world, as well as national governments, international organizations, academia, civil society networks and several other stakeholders to share experiences, good practices and challenges in making SDG 14 a reality at the local level.



©City of Matosinhos

Speakers reflected on the importance for coastal cities and regions to invest in innovative sustainable solutions for long-term defenses against the impacts of climate change, including flooding, coastal erosion and rising sea-levels. During the discussions, the need for more funding and new funding mechanisms to support coastal cities and regions to combat climate change and build resilience was repeatedly stressed. Good practices of inclusive and innovative multi-stakeholder governance approaches were shared by many speakers, as well as calls for sub-national stakeholders to be fully engaged in decision-making processes related to the protection and preservation of maritime ecosystems. Additionally, the crucial role of ports and port cities as catalysts for greener and decarbonized logistics was noted, and there was a call for assessing port projects in metrics that go beyond GDP.

More information about the event is available [here](#).

High-Level Symposium on Water – Bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14 | Special Event | 27 June 2022, Lisbon

On 27 June 2022, the Government of Portugal organized a High-Level Symposium on Water – Bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14 in Lisbon. The Symposium was supported by the United Nations and the Governments of Argentina, Mozambique, Singapore, Tajikistan and the Netherlands.

The Symposium reinforced the connection between the salt and freshwater communities and emphasized that there is a single water cycle with no borders. The ocean is part of the hydrological cycle, and its health is linked to internal waters and coasts, which are in turn linked to waste management systems, and the provision of safe water and sanitation (SDG 6).



The health of the ocean is impacted when untreated water pollutes rivers and the sea. The Symposium underscored the importance of engagement and collaboration to reduce plastic waste and called for a legally binding treaty to be concluded by 2024. “Source to sea” could frame legal, financial and regulatory instruments to make salt and freshwater healthy. There is also a need to bolster research, policies, as well as investment in transport, planning and watershed management. Coastal areas are important to be considered as spaces where freshwater and the ocean meet, considering the important roles of seagrass, mangroves and salt marshes. Partnerships and financial tools are needed to speed up action on the ground, with communities and investments that address inequality and poverty. The human right to water and sanitation should be at the centre of these actions, reflecting that human wellbeing is linked to water and sanitation.

A recording of the Symposium can be found on [UN Web TV](#) and related documents [here](#).

Sustainable Blue Economy and Investment Forum | Special Event | 28 June 2022, Cascais

On 28 June 2022, the Governments of Kenya and Portugal hosted a Sustainable Blue Economy Investment Forum in Cascais. The event was supported by the Municipality of Cascais and UN DESA.

At the event, speakers stressed that the sustainable blue economy should be circular, based on renewable resources, and include not just the ocean, but also lakes, rivers and wetlands. Marine resources, which can provide several benefits including new forms of nutrition, need to be sustainably used. The need for increased funding to drive implementation was noted. In this regard, a group of nine philanthropies announced a collective commitment of USD 1 billion to support ocean conservation and the creation, expansion and management of marine protected areas.

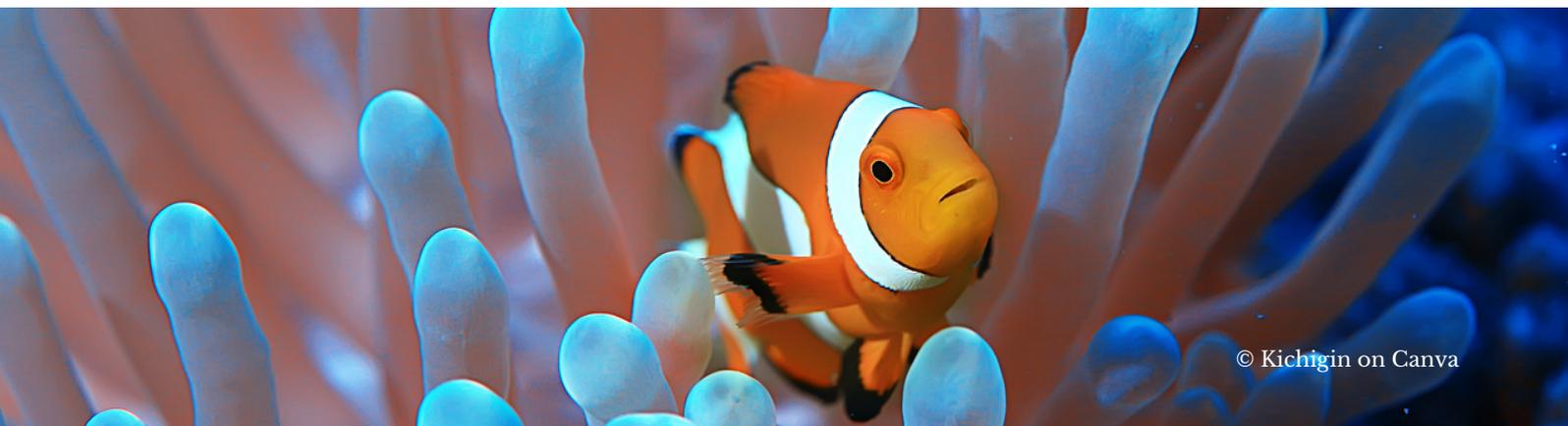
More information about the event is available [here](#).



Side Events

Over 300 side events were held in Lisbon, Portugal, and virtually from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in connection with the UN Ocean Conference. Organized by the Member States, intergovernmental organizations, UN entities and other stakeholders, these events covered a wide range of topics and many resulted in the announcement of new voluntary commitments aimed at supporting the implementation of SDG 14 and ramping up engagement for the UN Ocean Decade.

More information about side events is available [here](#).



VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

1. Strengthening the Blue Economy by supporting Research Capacity Development in Seychelles by The Blue Economy Department of the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy (Government), [46868](#)

For the Seychelles, which is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and a leader in advancing the concepts and development model associated with the Blue Economy, it is important to develop research that provides data and information for the formulation of sound policies and regulations that support the conservation and protection of the sea and its resources, as well as its planned economic development. As such, Seychelles is committing to increasing the capacity of research institutions by managing and coordinating research projects aimed at developing the Blue Economy and enhancing local, regional and international partnerships, in an effort to strengthen the country's Blue Economy development concept and adhering to global efforts in sustainable use of the ocean.

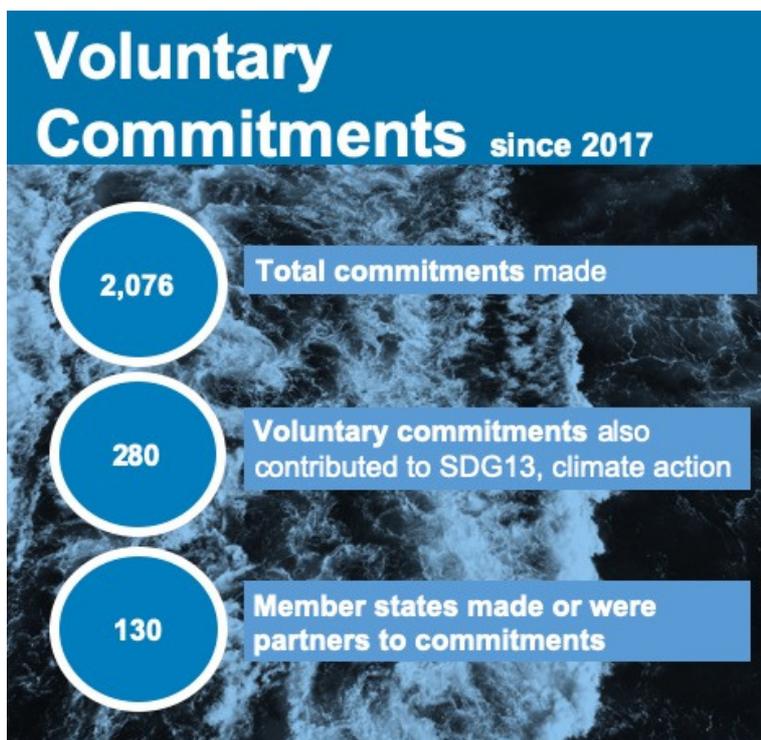
2. Seafood Watch: Incorporating a Social Equity/Human Rights Based Approach to Seafood Sustainability by Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch (Non-governmental organization (NGO)), [47447](#)

Seafood Watch is developing a human rights-based approach to assess and ensure social sustainability throughout seafood supply chains. This includes support for seafood produced by fishers, farmers and seafood workers who have safe working conditions; receive fair and equitable remuneration (including benefits of environmental improvements); have access to natural resources critical to their livelihoods; don't face discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and migration status; have access to basic social services and can participate in decision making. Seafood Watch's goal is to fully integrate human rights-based social sustainability analysis and actions with Seafood Watch's existing environmentally focused programmes and activities to ensure more equitable outcomes.

3. **Voluntary Commitment on ocean acidification by the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (Intergovernmental organization), 46914**

OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 commits the OSPAR Commission to raising awareness of climate change and ocean acidification by monitoring, analyzing and communicating their effects; facilitating adaptation to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification by considering

developing programmes, actions and measures; and mitigating the effects of climate change and ocean acidification by contributing to global efforts, including by safeguarding the role of the marine environment as a natural carbon store.



4. **CLME+: Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of Shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large marine Ecosystems; UN Development Programme (United Nations / Multilateral body), 47045**

The UN Development Programme (UNDP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Project is a five-year effort that aims to facilitate the implementation of the ten-year Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Shared Living Marine Resources of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+ SAP). The project seeks to achieve this by facilitating ecosystem-based management/an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EBM/EAF) within the CLME+ region, in a way that secures the provision of goods and services from the region's living marine resources in a sustainable and climate resilient manner. Given its regional and comprehensive nature, the UNDP/GEF CLME+ Project is uniquely positioned to address the root causes of environmental degradation, in particular the gaps and weaknesses in transboundary and cross-sectoral governance arrangements. The project will also support stakeholders to achieve improved coordination, collaboration and integration among ongoing and newly planned projects and initiatives that are of relevance to the wider objectives of the CLME+ SAP.

5. **Promotion of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network East Asia Regional Activities by Ministry of the Environment, Japan (Government), 46509**

Japan contributed East Asian data to the global analysis conducted by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) in 2020-2021, as well as to the regional analysis of coral reef monitoring data in the GCRMN East Asia region and published a report. In the future, Japan will organize each of the 14 GCRMN East Asia countries' and regions' monitoring data collected for the regional analysis and develop an appropriate database construction policy. Also, Japan will collaborate with the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI-CFF), which consists of six countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, to establish a monitoring network and to share data.

6. Connect to Protect the Eastern Tropical Pacific Coalition Commitment (Non-governmental organization (NGO)), [47611](#)

Spanning from Costa Rica and Panama to the north and Colombia and to the south of Ecuador, the rich waters of the Eastern Tropical Pacific (EPT) region are among the world's most productive, biologically diverse and ecologically significant marine environments. Yet, these thriving waters – and the communities that depend on them – face growing threats. Leaders from Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama, as well as non-governmental organizations, private sector and philanthropic organizations, commit to protecting marine environments of the EPT region. Together, these commitments cover some 324,000 square kilometers of ocean. Additionally, each country has already committed to protecting at least 30 per cent of their respective exclusive economic zone.

Other Voluntary Commitments*

- > The classification of marine and coastal protected areas and the improvement of participatory management by Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energies Algeria, [46479](#)
- > Advancing government transparency in marine fisheries management by Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI), [46529](#)
- > Investing EUR 10 million in a large demonstration of measures and management for coastal and marine ecosystems restoration and resilience, [46880](#)
- > Develop and approve the action plan to mitigate the accidental capture of sensitive species (seabirds, reptiles and cetaceans) by the end of 2023 and develop training actions for fishermen by 2030, [47380](#)
- > Strengthening the Blue Economy by supporting Research Capacity Development in Seychelles, [46868](#)
- > Witness: Documenting threatened coastal ecosystems in Thiladhunmathi atoll, [46953](#)
- > Facilitating global coordination and collaboration on ocean acidification, [46916](#)

*A full list of voluntary commitments submitted during the 2022 UN Ocean Conference can be found in the conference report [here](#).

- > Develop and approve the action plan to mitigate the accidental capture of sensitive species (seabirds, reptiles and cetaceans) by the end of 2023 and develop training actions for fishermen by 2030, [47380](#)
- > Supporting countries in their fisheries and aquaculture sector's adaptations to climate change including increased access to climate finance, [46123](#)
- > Establishment of a network of Marine Protected Areas in the Autonomous Region of Príncipe through a co-management approach, [46079](#)
- > Measure Resource efficiency among tourism businesses to avoid negative impacts on marine and terrestrial ecosystems, [46147](#)
- > The Republic of Korea has pledged to develop technology to collect marine plastic debris and address microplastic pollution, [46782](#)
- > The Republic of Korea has pledged to develop relevant technology to restore coastlines based on blue carbon by Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea, [46784](#)
- > EU/UNDP Project: European Union for Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea, [46767](#)
- > Enhancement of coastal ocean observation and prediction in collaboration with the space agency and local stakeholders toward effective coastal fishery and ecosystem management to contribute to the achievement of SDG14, [46668](#)
- > Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific, [46483](#)
- > Doubling the EU external funding for biodiversity over the period 2021-2027 (European Commission), [46873](#)
- > Training course on International Law of the Sea (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore), [46865](#)
- > Decreasing ship-source pollution (European Commission), [46836](#)
- > Exploring the feasibility of an Intergovernmental Panel for Ocean Sustainability (European Commission), [46831](#)
- > The Ocean Foundation's Blue Resilience Initiative (BRI) commits to investing USD \$8M over three years (2022-25) to support coastal habitat restoration, conservation, and agroforestry in the Wider Caribbean Region (The Ocean Foundation), [46795](#)
- > Creating awareness and ensuring access to technology through education & community programs, [43249](#)
- > Roadmap to Oceans and Climate Action (ROCA), [40747](#)
- > Artists for Ocean Conservation, [46012](#)
- > Preserve and protect the marine environment against pollution by (plastic) litter and microplastics through prevention and reduction, [42219](#)

UPDATES FROM THE COMMUNITIES OF OCEAN ACTION (COAS)

COMMUNITY OF OCEAN ACTION

CORAL REEFS

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On 29 June 2022, on the occasion of the UN Ocean Conference, the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) organized a breakfast event, Turning the Tide #ForCoral, to present the ICRI Plan of Action 2021-2024 to a high-level audience known for its unwavering support of coral reefs.

Attendees included His Serene Highness (H.S.H) Prince Albert of Monaco, Her Royal Highness (H.R.H) Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, Assistant Secretary Monica Medina from the U.S. Department of State, Dr Richard W. Spinrad (Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), Elizabeth Maruma Mrema (the Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity), the Rt Hon Baroness Patricia Scotland QC (Commonwealth Secretary-General) and other high-level supporters of coral reefs.



The discussions highlighted critical actions that are needed for coral reefs, and the need to maintain progress towards SDG 14 (conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources) and SDG 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts). The event also featured a face-to-face handover of the ICRI flag, symbolising the passing of the chairmanship from the previous ICRI chairs (Australia, Monaco and Indonesia) to the United States of America, who is chairing the initiative for the third time.

The Plan of Action 2021-2024, Turning the Tide for Coral Reefs was recently released by the USA, as the Chair of ICRI.

The Plan of Action seeks to drive Ocean Action #ForCoral through four guiding themes:

- > Theme 1: Preparing for the Future: Promoting Resilient Coral Reefs
- > Theme 2: Coral Reef Science and Oceanography: Advancing and Utilizing the Latest Science and Technology
- > Theme 3: Local Threat Reduction: Integrating Response Planning Frameworks
- > Theme 4: Diversity and Inclusion: Expanding the Coral Reef Community.

Learn more and download the Plan of Action [here](#).

ICRI is a global partnership of 96 members, composed of Nations and organizations, that strives to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems around the world. ICRI is also the co-chair of the Coral Reefs Community of Ocean Action alongside the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



A vibrant underwater scene featuring a large, branching piece of white coral in the foreground. A small, black and white striped clownfish is swimming near the coral. The background shows a deep blue ocean with other smaller fish and a dark, rocky seabed.

COMMUNITY OF OCEAN ACTION

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

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Ocean acidification (OA), its drivers and impacts, were key issues discussed at the 2022 UN Ocean Conference. The ocean acidification community coordinated side events, panels, and gatherings to engage with stakeholders, present the latest actions, and to facilitate pathways for new partners to join activities addressing ocean acidification.

The outcome document of the Conference reaffirms that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and that the world is deeply alarmed by the adverse effects of climate change on the ocean and marine life. United Nations Member States recognized the importance of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and its vision to achieve the science we need for the ocean we want.

The week was filled with events on ocean acidification and how to address its mitigation and adaptation to its impacts, based on the best science available.

On Monday, 27 June 2022, the [OA Alliance](#) together with the Commonwealth Blue Charter, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, and the [Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network](#) (GOA-ON) convened a breakfast meeting, [Climate Financing for Ocean Adaptation & Resilience Measures](#). The meeting brought together OA science and policy coordinating bodies, national governments, and international climate finance regimes with the aim of supporting countries in implementing climate adaptation and resilience strategies that advance goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. The discussion established a better understanding of pathways to help in making climate financing available for ocean acidification adaptation and community resiliency strategies.

On Tuesday, 28 June 2022, GOA-ON co-chair Jan Newton delivered remarks at the side event Our Changing Ocean: Navigating Observations and Building Research-Driven Solutions. This event focused on bringing together leading partners in ocean observation to develop a cohesive global research network that can allow for ocean and climate solutions, which will be critical to survival. The new [Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability](#) (OARS) programme in the UN Decade of Ocean Science was highlighted as being equipped to provide the high-resolution ocean acidification data. Steve Widdicombe, GOA-ON co-chair, also spoke at the UNESCO UN-DOALOS side event Ocean Science and Its Policy Interface: from Knowledge to Sustainable Ocean Solutions.



This was a platform for world experts engaged in the UN Decade of Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and in the UN Regular Process to showcase ambitious science-based initiatives that are accessible, reliable, scalable and sustainable. Widdicombe's intervention focused on the cumulative effects of multiple ocean stressors and, in particular, ocean acidification.

Wednesday, 29 June 2022, focused on issues relating to Ocean Acidification, starting with the Interactive Dialogue 3 on “Minimizing and addressing ocean acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming”, informed by a concept paper led by IOC-UNESCO and the IAEA.

The interactive dialogue was followed by the side event “Taking action to address ocean acidification and implement SDG 14.3”, co-hosted by Ocean Acidification Alliance, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Commonwealth Blue Charter, IOC-UNESCO; IAEA Ocean Acidification International Coordination Center, the Global Ocean Acidification-Observing Network, the University of Washington and The Ocean Foundation. The event provided a platform to highlight voluntary commitments made by governments and civil society for advancing ocean acidification policy, financing, literacy, science and innovation for management.

Speakers demonstrated that increased local and regional knowledge of risks, impacts and coastal community priorities is helping to inform management and response strategies, in parallel to global efforts that are moving forward to provide society with the evidence needed to sustainably identify, monitor, mitigate and adapt to ocean acidification at relevant scales. The event helped leverage national and sub-national actors across the UN Decade of Ocean Science endorsed programme, Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability (OARS).

Lastly, also, on Wednesday, 29 June 2022, the Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability evening side event and reception co-organized by GOA-ON, IOC-UNESCO, PML, the IAEA and the Blue Marine Foundations joined together more than 100 UN Ocean Conference participants with the ocean acidification community to network on how action-driven trans-disciplinary science and cross-sectoral collaboration can help stakeholders adapt to the climate-induced challenges placed on the ocean and thus improve sustainable development.

On Thursday, 30 June 2022, a side event led by the University of Washington on Ocean Acidification: Co-designing data connections to underserved communities for equitable outcomes showcased a regional vulnerability assessment of ocean acidification in the Pacific Northwest performed with tribal members. The event discussed local as well as regional ocean acidification observing and teaching capacities in the Pacific Islands, and the intersection between indigenous ancestral knowledge, science and policy, each represented by panelists.

A new Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability (OARS) video was also launched on 30 June 2022, featuring the OARS co-leads Dr Jan Newton, Prof Steve Widdicombe, Dr Kirsten Isensee and Dr Libby Jewett, Director of the NOAA Ocean Acidification Programme and one of the lead authors of the IPCC 6th Assessment Report. The video highlights the effects of ocean acidification on the marine environment and the actions needed to better understand, adapt and mitigate these effects that OARS will undertake in the next few years. Dr Katy Soapi (The Pacific Community, Pacific Islands and Territories OA Hub co-chair), Dr Sheck Sherif (OA Africa Hub co-chair) and Dr Abed El Rahman Hassoun (Mediterranean OA Hub co-chair) spoke from their regional perspectives and joined the call to all interested researchers, stakeholders and decision makers to join OARS.



COMMUNITY OF OCEAN ACTION

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

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The 2022 UN Ocean Conference reaffirmed that the ocean is not just a fragile natural landscape we need to protect – it is an essential source of food, jobs and livelihoods for millions of people around the world.

Achieving SDG 14 is critical not only for the health of the ocean, but also to reduce poverty and eradicate hunger. Our ocean, rivers and lakes can help feed the world, but only if we use their valuable resources responsibly, sustainably and equitably.

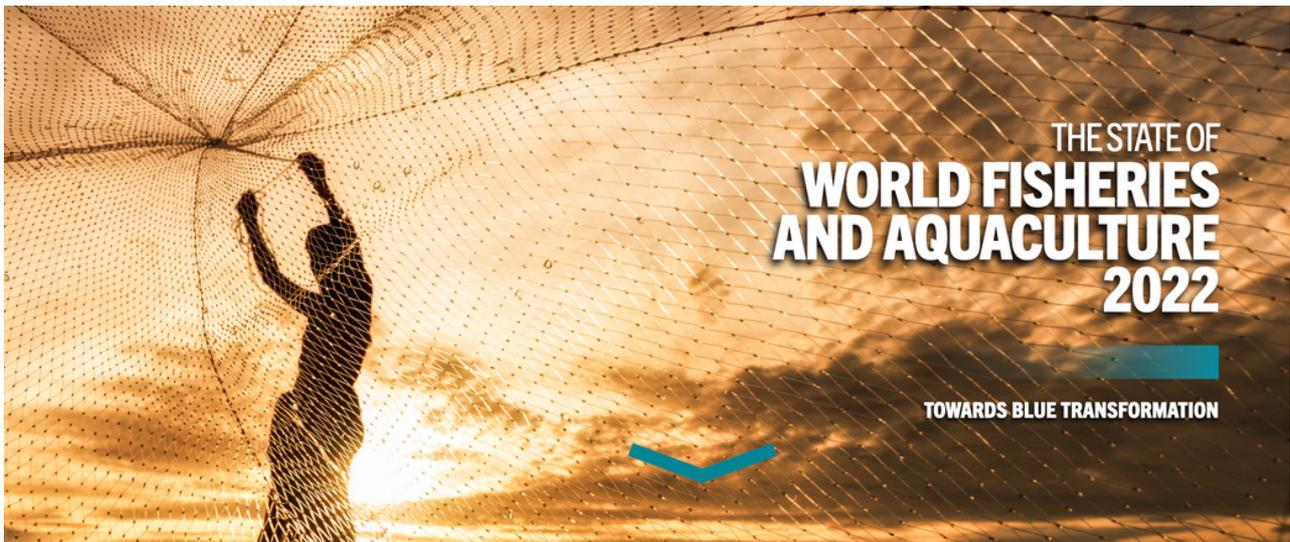
At the Conference, it was recognized that unsustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices threaten that goal, and that far more needs to be done to address the detrimental effects of human activity on aquatic biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, as well as the impacts of climate change on aquatic resources.

Conference representatives from governments, civil society, IGOs, NGOs and academia agreed that for the ocean to contribute more effectively to the social, economic and environmental well-being of our planet, fisheries and aquaculture need to be further transformed.

At the Conference, a strategy for Blue Transformation emerged, one that promotes growth driven by key principles: sustainability, equity and resilience. Production advances go hand-in-hand with improving the working conditions and rights of those who depend on the sector for their livelihoods as well as improvements in the state of our aquatic ecosystems.

The outcome declaration of the Conference further emphasizes the urgency of the challenge, stating, “transformation is essential to halt and reverse the decline in the health of the ocean’s ecosystems and to advance sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems.”

The Conference provided clear direction on where Community of Ocean Action #9 – Sustainable Fisheries – should focus efforts moving forward:



1. **The state of fishery resources.** The 2022 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) report notes that the percentage of stocks fished at biologically sustainable levels dropped 1.2 per cent to 64.6 per cent in the last assessment, revealing a deteriorating trend. However, 82.5 per cent of all marine fisheries landings in 2019 were from biologically sustainable stocks, an increase of almost 4 per cent since 2017. When managed effectively, fisheries stocks can be rebuilt and can rise above targets. **Effective management is the best means for conservation.** The need to sustain or improve the condition of ecosystems and their productivity is essential for maintaining or increasing the quality and value of fisheries production.

2. **Knowledge and science** are the foundation of effective management. The UN Decade of Ocean Science is advancing on many fronts. A key Programme of the Decade is the EAF Nansen, which is working to improve research and fill knowledge gaps in fisheries and aquaculture, to enable governments to better understand and respond to emerging needs and challenges for the sustainable use of marine resources and ecosystems. Today, the EAF-Nansen Programme is addressing multiple dimensions of food insecurity and the sustainable use of the ocean in 32 partner countries in Africa and the Bay of Bengal, looking into emerging threats such as marine pollution and climate change, while prioritizing fisheries governance, together with developing human and institutional capacity.

3. **Stamping out Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing is key to sustainable fisheries and to the conservation of aquatic resources.** Global binding tools to combat IUU fishing in all its complexities are essential but, in order to have an impact need to be implemented. The FAO Port State Measures Agreement, the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Catch Documentation Schemes, the recent landmark Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies at the WTO, and the expected adoption by upcoming FAO Committee on Fisheries (5-9 September 2022, Rome, Italy) of the Voluntary Guidelines of Transshipment, are examples of robust tools to ensure illegally caught aquatic foods do not reach our plates.

The agreement reached by Lusophone countries at UNOC on a common mechanism to eradicate IUU fishing, is an encouraging sign that things are going in the right direction and countries are more willing to fulfill their obligations to combat IUU fishing.

4. **Aquaculture accounts for half of the aquatic foods we eat and will be key to supporting millions of livelihoods in the future** because it has the potential to offer high quality foods with a lower impact on the environment than land-based food systems. The sector produced a record high output of 122.6 million tonnes in 2020 worth a total value of USD 281.5 billion. Aquaculture's expansion has often occurred at the expense of the environment so sustainable and equitable development will be crucial to meet the growing demand for aquatic foods. FAO's efforts to develop Global Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture is in line with this need.

5. **Fisheries and aquaculture** not only make a great contribution to global food security but **sustain national economies**, particularly in SIDS and in least developed countries. Around 600 million livelihoods depend on fisheries and aquaculture, most of them small-scale producers from the Global South. **People are integral to the management of our resources** and the many interests of those who depend on marine ecosystems have to be addressed. They all need to be supported, empowered and enabled to do better for themselves, their families and their communities. Much has already been done to apply national frameworks that recognize and protect access rights for small-scale fishers. The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries is a cornerstone document. The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture is a major opportunity in 2022 to ensure that the voices of small-scale artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers are heard.

6. **Equitable, sustainable and resilient aquatic food systems** can be achieved if transformation occurs across the entire value chain, from production to consumption. Reducing fish loss and waste, adding value to products, ensuring transparency in trade, empowering women and distributing benefits equitably, are just few of the key issues that can contribute to economic growth. It's also critical for aquatic foods to be included in national food security and nutrition strategies with policies enabling investment and innovation.



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