

LOCALIZING ACTION FOR THE OCEAN: LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS SPECIAL EVENT

25 JUNE 2022

10:00 – 17:30 (WEST)

Matosinhos, Portugal

For more information: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/LRGspecialevent-2022UNOC>

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Convened by the United Nations General Assembly and co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal, the “[United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development](#)” was held from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in Lisbon, Portugal, under the overarching theme: “*Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions*”.

In connection with the Conference, Portugal and Kenya, together with the City of Matosinhos, Portugal, hosted a [Special Event on Localizing Ocean Action](#) on **25 June 2022** in Matosinhos. The event was organized in collaboration with UN DESA, UN Global Compact, the Climate Champions Team and networks of local and regional governments gathered in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, Regions4, Ocean & Climate Platform, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Resilient Cities Network, the International Association Cities & Ports (AIVP) and OECD.

The main outcomes of the discussions were presented by Ms. Luisa Salgueiro, Mayor of Matosinhos, at the last plenary session of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference. Her statement is available [here](#) (in Portuguese).

Opening Session

Ms Luísa Salgueiro, *Mayor of Matosinhos*, opened the event recalling the fundamental role of local and regional governments in protecting the ocean. She highlighted the importance of a blue economy approach that protects natural resources while generating jobs.

Mr. Julius Korir, *Principal Secretary, Ministry of Devolution of the Republic of Kenya*, reminded that, by 2025 nearly 6 billion people will be living in 200km of the coastline and the protection of the ocean is interconnected to the protection of their lives and livelihoods.

H.E. Ms. Ana Abrunhosa, *Minister of Territorial Cohesion, Portugal*, reinforced the commitment of the Portuguese Government to keep prioritizing ocean-related investments, through active diplomacy and research. She recalled that local governments, being closest to the populations and with a deep knowledge of the context and local communities, are in a key position to translate and transpose concretely and efficiently the broad agenda of ocean protection to the daily life of all citizens.

Keynote Speaker:

Ms. Ana Paula Vitorino, *President of Mobility and Transport Authority and former Minister of the Sea, Portugal* – highlighted that the governance of the sea requires complex coordination, as both the design of policies and their effects on populations work in several layers. Governance mechanisms that allow multidisciplinary approaches are needed, with various territorial levels, from global to local, and that allow populations to be involved in the design and implementation of policies and enjoy the benefits generated. She reinforced the importance of blue economy to finance the preservation and recovery of the ocean and coastal areas, generating opportunities of economic development that simultaneously contribute to improving human health and maritime and terrestrial ecosystems.

Local Ocean Action Session 1: The clock is ticking: How can coastal cities build resilience and incorporate nature-based solutions to protect local populations?

This session was co-organized by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and Ocean & Climate Platform (OCP)

Dr. Kate Stratchan (moderator), *Climate Change Resilience Manager, ICLEI World Secretariat*, recalled that although coastal cities have accumulated experience in responding to challenges for hundreds of years, current climate hazards are happening more frequently and with higher impact.

Ms. Janelle Kellman, *Mayor, Sausalito, United States* – called for passionate, tireless local champions and for funding to reach the local level, including small cities. She proposed the development of an inventory of bottlenecks that are preventing local governments from accessing funding.

Ms. Inês de Medeiros, *Mayor of Almada, Portugal* – reminded that municipalities are accountable to manage their territories for mitigation and that it is important to trust municipalities to reconcile social, economic and nature challenges.

Mr. Nuno Araújo, *President, APDL, Port of Leixões, Portugal*, called for all investments in infrastructure to count on a measurement of its contributions to supporting with the environmental protection. He also mentioned the importance of energy transition, including producing energy through waves, in order to set up alternative sources of green energy.

Mr. Emmanuel Nzai, *CEO of Jumuiya ya Kaunti za Pwani, Kenya* – Presented the experience of the “Go Blue project”, a joint initiative to advance the Blue Economy agenda across all six Counties in Kenya's coastal region, with the support of the European Union. He reinforced the importance of working with local governments and targeting local communities, youth and women.

Mr. Antonio Basanta Fernández, *Director General of Fishing, Aquaculture and Technological Innovation, Consellería do Mar, Galicia, Spain* recalled the importance of local governments being at the forefront of green fisheries and blue economy.

Ms. Stefania Romano, *Global Coordinator, Cities with Nature & Regions with Nature, Advocacy & Recruitment, ICLEI, Africa* – Shared information about an action platform for local governments to monitor and track local commitments towards global ones.

Ms. Marine Lecerf, *International Policy Officer, Ocean & Climate Platform (OCP)* – Informed about the dialogue created by the Ocean & Climate Platform focused on solutions addressing the policy perspective, adaptation and resilience and engagement of non-state actors.

Key elements of context

- The latest IPCC report makes very clear that cities and settlements by the sea have to adapt urgently. In parallel, there has never been a more urgent need to restore damaged ecosystems than now.
- By 2025, nearly 6 billion people will live within 200km of a coastline. Population growth and climate change-related impacts such as sea level rise and storm surges are increasing coastal risks and degrading coastal ecosystems upon which millions depend.
- Climate risks also compound existing pressures. In many cities around the globe, rapid urbanization is outpacing infrastructure development – including housing and waste management. People and nature are becoming increasingly vulnerable.
- Only with healthy ecosystems can we enhance people’s livelihoods, counteract climate change, and stop the collapse of biodiversity. Nature and ecosystem-based solutions provide a high number of valuable benefits to humans, including raw materials and food, coastal protection, erosion control, water purification, maintenance of fisheries, carbon sequestration, and tourism, recreation, education, and research. Their implementation must be urgently accelerated.

Key messages and recommendations from the panel

- **Coastal territories adaptation must be considered at larger territorial scale.** From megalopolis to secondary cities and small towns, the more vulnerable urban areas must collaborate at regional scale to better design sustainable coastal adaptation strategies. It is crucial to reinforce cooperation at every level and encourage a “whole-of-society” approach.
- **Climate coastal adaptation is changing towards a new sustainable paradigm.** There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Managed retreat, nature-based solutions, hard and soft coastal protection, technical innovations, early warning systems, raising awareness, education are all relevant responses that should be combined, considering the local context.
- **Key coastal stakeholders have to be engaged in the global coastal transition** for a sustainable blue economy, a well-adapted coastline and an equitable future. Local decision makers, populations, civil society, ports, tourism sector and private sector should all be part of a co-construction process.
- **Coastal adaptation and resilience have to consider societal issues.** Many communities face challenges in securing funds and techniques for equitable coastal resilience. Targeting youth and women in terms of livelihood, coastal adaptation might be an opportunity to reduce poverty and social inequalities.

- Inventorying bottlenecks that can limit local decision makers ability to take action on known solutions.
- Harnessing the skills and opportunities within all municipal departments.
- Securing finance for climate change and sustainability actions.
- Addressing coastal cities resilience and adaptation issues under the relevant UNFCCC process: through NDCs, Nairobi Work Programme on Ocean and Global Action Agenda, and under CBD since ecosystems can attenuate the impacts of climate change on coastal cities.

Local Ocean Action Session 2: Unlocking financial flows for adapting coastal cities to climate change and building resilience

This session was co-organized by Resilient Cities Network and Ocean & Climate Platform (OCP)

Mr. Ignace Béguin (moderator), *Ocean Lead, UN Climate Champions*

Mr. Ricardo Mourinho Félix, *Vice-President of the European Investment Bank* – reminded that coastal protection is a public good and that all benefit from coastal services and ecosystems without necessarily paying for it. Coastal protection requires large investments plans and the need to bring the public and private sector together. He recommended piling up projects, bringing small scale projects together to reach a critical mass and maximize impact. This will also demand the engagement of all stakeholders and their ownership.

Mr. Miguel Marques, *Founding partner, Skipper & Wool, and Blue Info Global Leader* – recommended setting up an interface secretariat to translate the virtual financial world to people that needs to access the funding.

Professor António Cunha, *President of Norte Portugal Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR-N)* – shared some experiences from the Regional Coordination and Development Commission on ocean protection and financing support.

Ms. Preet Sinha, *Executive Secretary, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)* – highlighted the critical need for multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen SDG 14 investment, including public-private partnership. Ms. Sinha shared information about UNCDF “Municipal Investment Financing” and the Global fund for Coral Reefs and the opportunity created by the Ocean Conference to bring public and private funding in support to SDG 14.

Mr. Theophile Bongarts, *Manager, Seat’ies* – Reflected on the Sea’ties declaration by 40 Mayors launched during the One Ocean Summit for adaptation to sea level rise and calling for all stakeholders to accelerate adaptation solutions. He flagged the lack of interest from the private sector in financing coastal adaptation solutions and, at the same time, the limited number of requests from coastal cities. There is a need for capacity building support, especially for least and developing countries, for the development of projects on adaptation and resilience.

Mr. Stewart Sarkozy-Banoczy, *Global Director, Policy and Investments, Resilient Cities Network*, informed about the launch of a resilience community impact fund and the importance of building resilience into projects.

Mr. David Schurman, *CEO, Voice of the Ocean* – Flagged the different ways to financing ocean protection actions and his perspective of increased collaboration.

Key elements of context

- While some cities, towns and regions have developed adaptation plans and holistic resilience strategies, too few elements of these plans have been implemented due to capacity and resource constraints, as well as concentrated funding and finance that embraces holistic, equitable resilience.
- Coastal municipalities, which are the first to witness the impacts of ocean-related changes, need more support and targeted blended finance from international financial institutions, banks, development finance institutions, the insurance industry, and the private sector in general.
- Radical collaboration is needed to unlock massive private investments and public funding for coastal cities adaptation and building resilience.

Key messages and recommendations from the panel

- **There is a lack of implementation of coastal adaptation responses**, especially in low-income countries. More that funding, unlocking financial flows also requires an enabling environment.
- **At the interface of land and sea, ports and blue economy in general are at the heart of coastal adaptation solutions** and can play a major role in the transition.
- **Unlocking financial flows for coastal cities adaptation and resilience requires to gather coastal cities managers, private, public and all relevant blue economy stakeholders.** It has also not been common practice for ocean, urban, resilience and sustainability practitioners to “gather under one tent” to break down the existing silos that hold back effective and streamlined development and focus with a common climate and resilience adaptation lens.
- **Coastal protection requires massive investment plans**, including from global organisations such as the European Investment Bank. The public sector has a crucial role to play to implement incentives to facilitate investments from the private sector. Public-private partnerships (PPP) are key to the scaling-up of financing and optimizing the impacts of ocean-based solutions. Private actors have to integrate adaptation issues in pre-existing projects, and better anticipate coastal hazards in order to build a sustainable blue economy.
- **The question of scale is very important.** There is no one “size-fits-all solution”, especially considering the differences between megalopolises and smaller cities. It is possible to transform actions and adequate financial arrangements at the regional level, beyond cities boundaries.
- UNFCCC COP 27 will be an opportunity to scale-up financing to enhance the implementation of coastal responses.
- In order to tackle the dual challenges of setting up innovative, scalable and bankable adaptation projects in coastal cities and securing private and public capitals, a **Coastal Resilience Investment Protocol** has been launched. The objective is to help address

structural barriers (capacity, feasibility studies, risks aversion) and provide an avenue for “radical collaboration” among key private (banks, investors, insurance, credit rating agencies) and public (IFIs, regional and national DFIs and climate funds), relevant blue economy industries (tourism, shipping, ports) and coastal cities. A **Global Fund** to finance feasibility studies, project preparation, innovation and scaling up have also been announced.

Keynote Speaker:

H.E. Mr. Duarte Cordeiro, *Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Portugal* – reinforced the importance of cities and coastal regions in protecting the seas and oceans and that the Ocean Conference was an opportunity to reflect on the many challenges facing local and regional communities, especially those resulting from climate change. He called for governance approaches that give local actors a leading role, because locally led adaptation is often more effective, faster and less costly. He called the attention to the creation of marine protected areas, both on land and at the sea as a key work to be done in collaboration with local and regional authorities.

Local Ocean Action Session 3 – Strengthening cooperation, building inclusive and governance approaches to protect the ocean

This session was co-organized by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Regions4 and the Government of Catalonia, Spain

Mr. Jean Baptiste Buffet (moderator), *Head of Policy and Advocacy, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and in representation of the Global Taskforce for Local and Regional Governments (GTF)*

Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, *Mayor of Male, Maldives* reminded that local and regional governments are key actors in the management of oceans and called for collaboration in combating sea level rise and fostering waste management.

Mr. José Ribau Esteves, *Mayor of Aveiro and Vice-President, Portuguese Municipalities Association*, highlighted the work of Portuguese municipalities in supporting SDG 14 implementation, stressing the vital role that coordination among spheres of government has in the sustainable management of the oceans.

Mr. Sergi Tudela, *Director-General for Maritime Policy and Sustainable Fisheries, Government of Catalonia, Spain*, shared the multi-governance experiences in implementing SDG 14 in Catalonia reinforcing that there is no integrated oceans policy without including local and regional governments and stakeholders. In Catalonia, decentralized, formal co-management committees decide on fishing rules through a power-devolution scheme towards fishers, scientists and environmentalists. This successful model has also been upscaled to the management of maritime areas through so-called “maritime co-management tables.

Mr. Rodrigo Levkovicz, *Executive Director of the Forest Foundation, representing the government of São Paulo/SIMA, Brazil*, recalled the importance of nature-based solutions and multilevel

governance in the protection of the oceans. Mr. Levkovicz stressed the need to engage society directly in transformation processes, referring to examples of work implemented in Sao Paulo to combat marine pollution that mobilized fishermen, local communities, local authorities and academia.

Mr. Carlos Mucapera, *Secretary General of the National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique*, reflected that local and regional governments must be empowered and capacity building must be strengthened to protect our oceans and those that are most vulnerable. He recalled the importance of local government associations in this regard facilitating knowledge-exchange and learning activities for and among local and regional governments.

Mrs. Nicole Franz, *Fishery Planning Analyst, FAO* – focused on the key roles that planning and multi-stakeholder collaboration play in the sustainability of fisheries and sustainable use of the oceans and recalled the importance of anchoring change in lower levels of administration, through participatory approaches.

Mrs. Rita Sá, *Coordinator of fisheries and oceans, WWF Portugal*, shared experience of projects implemented locally, emphasizing ocean co-management processes must be accompanied by transparency and accountability to be effective.

Key elements of context

- The participation of all spheres of government and stakeholders is crucial for achieving a sustainable use and management of the planet and our oceans. Innovative multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance harnesses the cross-scale and cross-discipline relationships necessary for inclusive governance and decision-making that builds resilience and makes for maximum effectiveness in policymaking. Only through approaches focused on unpacking key tools, resources and innovative governance models can national, subnational, and local governments collaboratively engage on climate resilient development policies and ocean management to achieve SDG 14.
- Local and regional governments have been leading in developing effective solutions through local public service provision, partnerships and initiatives that include and support fishers and local populations and their knowhow and experience must be harnessed to protect our oceans.
- Co-management approaches among different spheres of government and actors trigger a culture of collaboration and trust thus enabling an ecosystem-based management. These approaches can in turn permeate to other sectors.
- The achievement of sustainable small-scale fisheries calls for inclusive and participatory governance arrangements, at all levels. This entails meaningful participation, taking into account and addressing existing power imbalances, strengthening stakeholder organizations, such as small-scale fisheries organizations and supporting dialogue and peer learning.
- Close collaboration among actors must be backed by scientifically recognized data, all facilitated by impartial elements that ensure accountability and transparent, informed and fair processes.

- The capacity of local and regional governments in building sustainable management models needs to be strengthened. Particularly, the capacity of SIDS and their cities and regions to respond to global challenges in light of increased ocean and sea degradation.
- Local and regional governments are willing to join the decision-making table on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, convening a powerful voice to global agendas, while promoting opportunities for peer-learning, exchange of experiences and scale-up of effective practices.

Key messages and recommendations from the panel

- Strengthening and recognizing the role of local and regional government and territories in the governance of oceans is essential for the achievement of the universal development agendas and SDG 14
- Highlighting the role of multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder collaboration in the protection of our oceans and the inclusion of cities, regions and territories beyond coastal areas is crucial to achieve meaningful ocean action.
- Strengthening capacities of local and regional governments in building sustainable innovative co-management models, where consensus among the different actors including scientists, NGOs, economic sectors and the administrations involved, ensures a decision-making process based on science and innovative solutions that reconcile the protection of maritime ecosystems and the preservation of ecosystem services with the maritime activities for the benefit of all.

Keynote Speaker:

Senator Marc. R. Pacheco, *Massachusetts, USA* – Senator Pacheco announced the launching of the “Transatlantic Alliance for Subnational Climate Action”, a private non-profit NGO foundation aimed at accomplishing the imperative goal of informing climate and ocean policy solutions and advocating for best practices. This will be an alliance of legislators and policymakers, leading scientific and academic experts, clean energy sector developers and innovators, climate advocates, and community voices - brought together to inform and enact bold climate solutions. Its central mission will be to empower subnational political leaders to successfully achieve rapid, region-wide decarbonization, secure a sustainable future, and prevent the worst effects of the global climate emergency. The initiative will specifically focus on communicating with policymakers about the urgency of the ongoing crisis, the dire consequences of inaction, and the invaluable benefits of embracing a swift and strategic clean energy transition.

Local Ocean Action Session 4: Ocean Action Session 4: Sustainable Transitions – Blue Economy, Energy transition and local and regional development

This session was co-organized by AIVP and OECD

Mr. Bruno Delsalle (Moderator), *General Manager, AIVP (International Association of Ports Cities)* and **Mr. José Sánchez** (Moderator), *Director of Agenda AIVP 2030, Projects and Content, AIVP.*

Mr. Mario Girard, *Vice-President of AIVP, CEO of the Port of Quebec, Canada* – emphasized the need to assess port projects in other metrics than just GDP impact. He flagged that Ports have a crucial role to play as catalysts of greener and decarbonized logistics, taking into consideration all other environmental and social externalities.

Hon. Fahim Yasin Twaha, *Governor, County Government of Lamu, Kenya* – stressed the importance of Ports in the blue economy and the key role that coordination plays among spheres of government for ocean protection.

Mr. Ashok Adicéam, *Counselor to the Ambassador for the Poles and Maritime affairs, One Ocean Summit* – recalled the four directions of actions from the One Ocean Summit, organized in Brest, in February 2022: 1) to protect marine biodiversity and resources; 2) to fight marine pollution; 3) to provide ocean solutions from climate change and 4) to support ocean governance.

Mr. Vítor Vasconcelos, *University of Porto and Director, CIIMAR* – Reflected on the importance of ocean literacy and the role of ports in supporting research and learning and shared some experiences from the APDL (Porto) and Matosinhos.

Ms. Yolanda Molares Montero, *Senior Consultant, Fisheries Officer, Blue Ports Initiative, Value Chain Development Team (NFIMV), Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, Head of Blue Ports Initiative, FAO* – shared information about the Blue Ports initiative which aims at helping ports in creating value in their territory, promote collaboration, capacity building and exchange.

Ms. Oriana Romano, *Head of Unit Water Governance and Circular Economy Cities, Urban Policies, and Sustainable Development Division Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD* – Called for a localized approach to the blue economy and for the adoption of a systemic approach, avoiding silos. She reinforced the importance of multi-level governance and of the need to build knowledge and check the ‘state of the art’ of Blue Economy in cities and regions.

Key elements of context

- Port Cities, as the main interface between land and water must play a leading role in the protection of the oceans and the development of the sustainable blue economy.
- The protection of biodiversity must be among the main environmental concerns for port city actors, next to the energy transition.
- New ways to evaluate coastal infrastructural projects are necessary, going beyond the economic impact.
- Stronger collaboration between ports is necessary to protect the oceans, going beyond competition and towards cooperation. Green corridors can be an example of this but need to look beyond emissions.
- The sustainable blue economy represents an immense opportunity for port cities to increase the added value they bring to society.
- Stronger efforts in multilevel governance and stakeholder engagement are necessary to translate sustainable blue economy national and international strategies into the local context.

Key messages and recommendations from the panel

- Port Authorities from all continents could consider signing the Joint Commitment presented during the One Ocean Summit by the French Government aiming for port stakeholders to reduce the environmental impact of ports. This declaration defends the creation of onshore power supply to reduce the impact of shipping in port cities and the oceans and the recognition of the importance of green corridors.
- Establishing a working group with port authorities and port cities to impulse the development of sustainable blue economy plans and the protection of the oceans, responding to SDG 14. The working group could support in creating guidelines for an inclusive blue economy recognizing the role ports play in it, as hubs of innovation and land-water interaction.
- National governments should recognize the role that ports have in the protection of the oceans and wetlands beyond the reduction of the emissions. It is fundamental to recognize this responsibility in the legal framework to allow port authorities to take more decisive action within its capacities
- Port city stakeholders should develop governance and planning frameworks and strategies that translate the global and national sustainable blue economy strategies to the local context. This will create new dialogues among actors, improving the port-city relationship, and fostering an effective protection of the oceans in coastal regions.
- Promoting a territorial approach towards a resilient, sustainable, inclusive and circular blue economy; to adopt a systemic approach in decision making linking institutional actors and key stakeholders, such as port authorities, preventing pollution, waste production and conserving biodiversity; implement the governance conditions for connecting water and land across levels of government.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Lauren Sorkin, *CEO/Executive Director, Resilient Cities Network, representing Local and Regional Government Networks* – highlighted four myths that were debunked during the event: 1) the myth that there are silos at the local level; 2) the myth that there are no integrated solutions being implemented, 3) the myth that local and regional governments are not interested in being active players on SDG 14 implementation, and 4) the myth that there are no partners willing to invest in local action. She reinforced the need of financial support, including for the necessary infrastructure that allows cities and regions to protect the ocean.

Ambassador Peter Thomson, *UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean* – Reminded the message that there is ‘No healthy planet without a healthy ocean’ and called for the 2022 UN Ocean Conference to bring a ‘fleet of solutions’ to protect the ocean.

H.E. Mr. José Maria Costa, *Secretary of State of the Sea, Portugal* – closed the event recalling that local and regional governments recognize their role in protecting the oceans. Without the ocean, life on land would not be possible. The ocean, its ecosystems represent deeply rooted cultural values which is currently impacted by the climate crisis. It is imperative that the necessary resources are mobilized to make coastal cities more resilient and sustainable.