



— UNITED NATIONS —  
**OCEAN**  
CONFERENCE



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

# OCEAN ACTION NEWSLETTER

**SUSTAINABLE  
BLUE ECONOMY**

**AUGUST 2023 | VOL.23**

# Table of Contents



Photo by Dmitry Antikin from Pexels

## 04

Introduction

## 05

Message on the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States

## 06

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

## 08

Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Sustainable Fisheries

## 12

Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Mangroves

## 13

Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Scientific Knowledge, Research Capacity Development and Transfer of Marine Technology



Photo by Jonathan Schmer from Pixels

## 15

Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Sustainable Blue Economy

## 16

Updates from the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030

## 17

Voluntary Commitments in the Spotlight

An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, transitioning to a deeper blue further out. A small, lush green island sits in the middle of the water, with white waves crashing against its base. In the background, a larger landmass with dense green vegetation and a winding road is visible. The sky is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

# Introduction

Photo by Max Ravier from Pexels

The ocean is at the heart of our planet, and innumerable livelihoods depend on them. In the face of numerous threats, a sustainable approach to ocean-based economic development, referred to as the sustainable blue economy (SBE), has been conceptualized and gained increasing interest worldwide in recent years. The SBE envisages economic growth while preserving the health and productivity of oceans and marine ecosystems. It encompasses industries like fisheries, aquaculture, marine renewable energy, biotechnology, tourism and shipping. However, a slew of challenges, such as overfishing, pollution, climate change, disjointed international coordination and governance, lack of enabling environment and limited access to financing and technology, impeded its realization.

To reverse the decline in the ocean's health, the United Nations has initiated nine Communities of Ocean Action (COAs),

thematic multi-stakeholder communities that facilitate the implementation of Voluntary Commitments (VCs) addressing one or several of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 targets. These VCs, made at the UN Ocean Conferences in 2017 and 2022 by governments, NGOs, financial institutions, private sector and academia contributing to a wide array of ocean actions, reflect a shift in development practice towards a more holistic approach, with an upscaled focus on financing the ambitious ocean agenda. For example, billions of dollars were pledged by philanthropic organizations and regional development banks to address the deterioration of the ocean's health and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources. To date, there are 2,800 ocean VCs in the online registry (SDG Actions Platform [sdgs.un.org/partnerships](https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships)) managed by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), making SDG 14 the most registered goal among the 17 SDGs.



# Message on the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States

Photo by Matteo Parisi from Pexels

The 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) will be held in May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda. Over four days, world leaders will come together to agree on a bold new programme of action for SIDS. Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, UN DESA, and Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (HRLLS), UN Office of the HRLLS, spoke about the Conference and discussed how the world can unite to keep SIDS afloat and give their citizens a sustainable and safe future.

"The preparation for the 4th International Conference on SIDS is taking place against the sobering backdrop of multiple crises. As open economies exposed to the vicissitudes of the world market, SIDS often bear the brunt of such forces.

The 4th Conference offers a fighting chance for SIDS – and to make this event successful, we should depart from the 'same old-same old' ways of doing things.

We need to seek renewed political commitment by all to effectively address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions with impact. We need to work with SIDS regional and global partners, North and South, seeking specific and targeted action on priority issues:

- (i) Addressing their vulnerabilities;
- (ii) Resolving debt challenges;
- (iii) Improving access to finance and funds,
- (iv) Moving forward on disaster risk reduction and climate actions, including loss and damage;
- (v) Overcoming the digital divide;
- (vi) Advancing real and meaningful transfer of technology and
- (vii) Strengthening long-term capacity building.

Only when we, as an inclusive community of nations, help realize the sustainable development of its most vulnerable members, can we claim the final success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. What the Conference will lead to is hopefully a brighter and more sustainable future – not only for the vulnerable communities of the SIDS, but also for the entire planet and the people of the world."



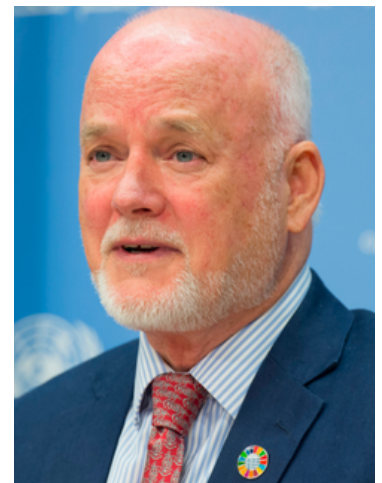
# Message from Ambassador Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean

Photo by Nirian from Getty Images  
Signature



In our struggle to stop the decline in the ocean's health, there is much to be encouraged about by recent and ongoing progress towards SDG 14's ultimate attainment. The High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) has been adopted and the race to ratify and begin its implementation is underway. The adoption by consensus of the Global Biodiversity Framework is a huge step forward with its commitment to effectively conserve and manage 30 per cent of the planet's land and sea by 2030. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee's decision to produce a draft text for the much-desired Plastic Pollution Treaty signifies solid progress to this end. Meanwhile ratification of the WTO agreement on harmful fisheries subsidies is gaining signatures and further WTO negotiations are underway to complete the full enabling of SDG 14.6. The Port State Measures Agreement, which is the most cost-effective means of curbing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, now has over 100 signatures with significant absent parties forecasted to join soon. We have successfully completed the first lap on these agreements, with some still in the second lap of ratification, and others moving into the third lap of implementation.

By the time of the UN Ocean Conference in Nice in June 2025 (UNOC 2025), the effective application of these agreements must be well underway.



Building upon the experience of the two previous UN Ocean Conferences, the UNOC 2025 Advisory Committee has commenced its proceedings under the co-chairmanship of Costa Rica and France. As co-hosts of the third UN Ocean Conference, Costa Rica and France are placing special emphasis on ocean science and the financing of the sustainable blue economy, with work well underway in both cases. It is also encouraging to observe that the Communities of Ocean Action are being refreshed and getting underway in preparation for UNOC 2025. In all these preparations, let us remember that at the second UN Ocean Conference, the central

importance of the sustainable blue economy was emphasised as the prime means of achieving the economic benefits sought from the 2030 Agenda while safeguarding the natural environment within which our species, and all life, derives its security and well-being.

*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 [the website](#).*

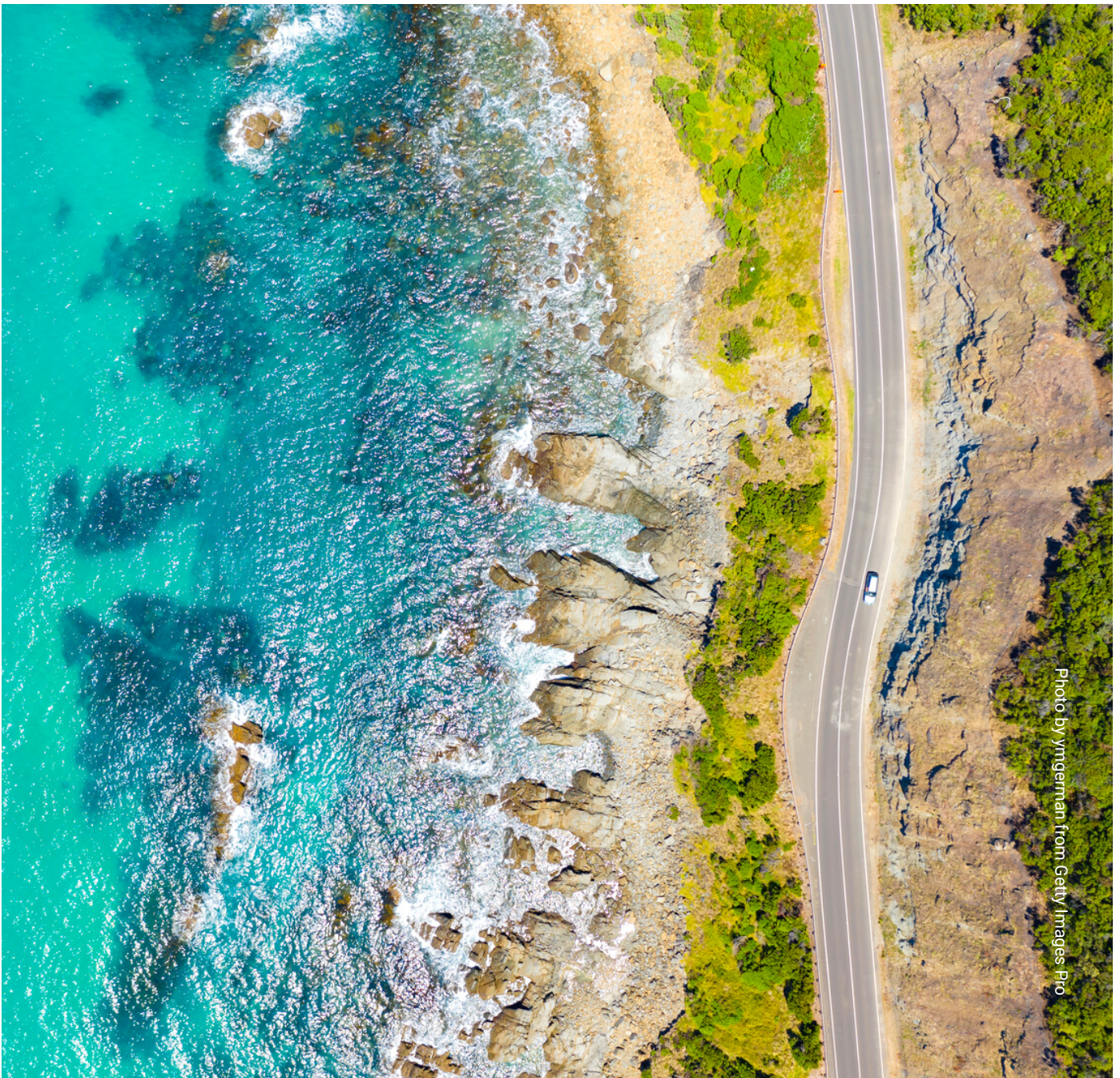


Photo by ymgerman from Getty Images Pro



# Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Sustainable Fisheries

Photo by sasint from Pixabay

## UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment

The UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) +2 Stocktaking Moment will take place in Rome, Italy, on 24-26 July 2023, at the premises of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It will be hosted by Italy, in collaboration with the Rome-based UN Agencies (FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Food Programme), the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and the wider UN system.

The high-level meeting aims to provide opportunities for countries to report on progress made at the national level and on their contributions to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – despite a current global context that has substantially changed.

A Special Event “Blue Transformation: advancing aquatic food systems for people, planet, and prosperity” will be held during the UNFSS Stocktaking Moment. Aquatic/ blue foods are among the priorities of 74 countries, or 66 per cent of registered national pathway. Of the countries that

prioritized aquatic/ blue foods in their pathways, 24 indicated finance and investment as a means of implementation. Aquatic/blue foods account for 642 of 20,295 registered pathway priorities, or 3.16 per cent of the total, which ranks aquatic/blue foods 11th out of 45 themes, below policy and regulation (1 – 14.34 per cent) and ahead of food quality and safety (12 – 3.12 per cent).

## International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture

The International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture was a great success. FAO, in close collaboration with other UN agencies, FAO members and partners, led the celebrations. The year proved to be a successful platform for collective action, with 266 events organized in some 68 countries worldwide, underpinned by a strong awareness-raising campaign.

Guided by members of the IYAF 2022 International Steering Committee, chaired by the Government of Peru, as well as three regional committees, it was a global collective commitment to promote and support the livelihoods of small-scale



artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers.

IYAFA highlighted the vital contributions that small-scale artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers can make toward achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of the outputs is the recent release of the landmark report “[Illuminating Hidden Harvests](#)”, produced by FAO, WorldFish and Duke University (USA), which concluded that 40% of the global fish catch comes from small-scale operators, with a value of USD 77 billion.

At the [35th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries](#), members commended FAO on the celebrations and achievements of IYAFA 2022, and emphasized the unique opportunity to continue this momentum by convening a Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) Summit biennially. At the next SSF Summit in July 2024, partners will gather to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the [FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#). The Summit will provide an opportunity to reflect on progress and challenges, and to build on the momentum seeking to empower small-scale artisanal fishers, fish farmers and fish workers to achieve an inclusive and equitable Blue Transformation.

## **Global push to step up action against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing**

Parties to the FAO's [Agreement on Port State Measures](#) (PSMA) have agreed to strengthen efforts to combat [illegal, unreported and](#)

[unregulated \(IUU\) fishing](#) by extending vessel inspections, exchanging global information and improving the capacity of developing states.

The [4th Meeting of the Parties](#), an event hosted by the Government of Indonesia in Bali on 8-12 May, endorsed a strategy to increase adherence to the PSMA. The Parties also agreed to take the global information exchange system (GIES), a digital system developed by FAO at the request of the Parties, from its current pilot phase to a fully operational system by the end of this year.

The PSMA is the first binding international agreement designed to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing by stopping foreign vessels engaging in it, from using ports, landing their catches and denying them entry. It is a key instrument to block fish products derived from IUU fishing from entering international markets.

So far 75 Parties, including the European Union as one Party on behalf of its Member States, have adhered to the PSMA. This represents 59 per cent of port States globally. Timor-Leste became the latest Party to the agreement at the end of May.

GIES plays a critical role in supporting the implementation of the PSMA. This global system shares vital information, including inspection reports and actions taken on foreign fishing vessels engaged in IUU fishing.

## **Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction**

The new Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) will be a



substantial addition to the legislative framework regulating activities in the high seas, including for the fisheries sector. To facilitate the recently concluded negotiations, FAO released a [publication](#) for BBNJ national delegates describing the implications of the Agreement for the fisheries sector.

FAO will play an important role in implementing the Agreement by promoting coherence and coordination with existing relevant legal instruments, frameworks and institutions, such as Regional Fisheries Management Organizations. In addition to overall capacity building, FAO will be asked to provide support on specific technical areas of the Agreement, such as area-based management tools, marine protected areas and environmental impact assessments.

FAO is also actively engaged in several projects and initiatives in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular through the Global Environment Facility's Common Oceans ABNJ programme, that since 2014 has been working to promote the sustainable use of fisheries and the protection of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). The sustainable utilization of fisheries resources in the high seas, the main objective of FAO in this area, is of outmost importance, and must be achieved through a combination of biodiversity conservation measures and resource management efforts.

## **WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies**

The adoption of the World Trade Organization (WTO) [Agreement on](#)

Fisheries Subsidies in June 2022 has the potential to be a game changer for the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources. It prohibits subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing, impact overfished stocks or fishing on the unregulated high seas and requires the support of two-thirds of WTO members in order to be operational.

Throughout the negotiating phases, FAO worked closely with WTO and its members providing technical advice on the complex world of fisheries management and how different proposals could affect and be affected by management measures.

As stipulated in Article 7 of the Agreement, FAO is cooperating with WTO to establish a voluntary funding mechanism and to provide targeted technical assistance and capacity building assistance to developing country members, including LDC members, for the purpose of implementation of the disciplines under the new World Trade Organization Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.

## **Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture**

Recognizing the need for practical guidance for government authorities and policymakers in their efforts to promote the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), FAO, as requested by its members, developed the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA).

The Guidelines support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of the important role of aquaculture in contributing to global, regional and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty. The Guidelines also support socioeconomic development for the benefit of current and future generations, in full respect of the environment, ensuring restoration and protection of aquatic habitats, biodiversity and ecosystems.

On 19 May 2023, the 12th Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) approved the revised final version of the GSA and endorsed its submission to the next Session of COFI (COFI 36) for adoption.



Photo by shaunl from Getty Images  
Signature



# Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Mangroves

Photo by Storyteller from Canva Pro

## Great Blue Wall

The Great Blue Wall (GBW) is a Western Indian Ocean (WIO)-born, African-driven roadmap to achieve a nature-positive world by 2030. Launched at the Conference of the Parties (COP) 26, the GBW is an action-driven regional response to the three interconnected crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and economic decline. It aims to effectively and equitably conserve at least 30 per cent of the ocean by 2030, conserve and restore critical blue ecosystems to achieve net-gain by 2030 and unlock the development of a regenerative blue economy that directly

benefits 70 million people in coastal communities while also delivering conservation outcomes. The GBW has been endorsed at several high-level international fora, including at the African Union General Assembly and recently in June 2023 at the “Blue Future Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy and Climate Action in Africa: Island and Coastal States at the Forefront” through the Moroni Declaration for Ocean and Climate Action in Africa endorsed by 11 countries. The GBW will continue gaining momentum, new commitments, strategic partnerships and implementation on the ground to be showcased at the upcoming COP 28.





# Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Scientific Knowledge, Research Capacity Development and Transfer of Marine Technology

Photo by EAGRE/Alamy Images

## **The International Seabed Authority, UN-OHRLLS and partners launch a global call for applications for women scientists from developing States to participate in the S.H.E. Mentoring Programme in deep-sea research**

The “See Her Exceed” (S.H.E.) Mentoring Programme was launched by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), UN-OHRLLS and other partners of the Women in Deep-Sea Research (WIDSR) project on the occasion of the World Oceans Day on 8 June 2023.

S.H.E. is a 12-month mentoring programme targeted at women scientists from developing countries, in particular from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, working in deep-sea related fields, to help them advance their careers and to support the development of a professional network and leadership skills.

The S.H.E. Mentoring Programme was designed to address the underrepresentation of women in marine science while promoting the leadership of women scientists from developing States in deep-sea research. It

builds on the first-ever gender mapping launched in June 2022 by the WIDSR project, which identified lack of career guidance as an impediment to professional development.

Applications are open until 31 August 2023. The mentorship meetings will start in October 2023. For more information, visit: [isa.org/jm/widsr-mentoring-programme](https://isa.org/jm/widsr-mentoring-programme).

## **ISA offers funding opportunity for deep-sea species taxonomy projects**

On the occasion of the International Day of Biological Diversity on 22 May 2023, the International Seabed Authority launched the “One Thousand Reasons” campaign under the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative (SSKI). The campaign calls for projects, which can contribute towards SSKI’s objectives, to describe at least one thousand deep-sea species new to science in areas beyond national jurisdictions by 2030.

Applicants are invited to submit their project proposals by 22 July 2023. Successful applicants will receive financial

support of up to USD 20,000, enabling them to conduct laboratory analysis, data processing, publication and dissemination.

For more information, visit: [isa.org.jm/sski/call-for-taxonomy-projects](https://isa.org.jm/sski/call-for-taxonomy-projects).



Photo by J. Wildman from Getty Images Pro



# Updates from the Community of Ocean Action (COA): Sustainable Blue Economy

Photo by invisiblepower from Pexels

## Three of eight voluntary commitments registered by the International Seabed Authority support the sustainable development of ocean economies of developing States

ISA has registered eight voluntary commitments to support the implementation of SDG 14 at the UN Ocean Conferences in 2017 and 2022. Three of them directly support the development of sustainable blue economies of developing Member States.

Supporting Africa's blue economy (#OceanAction 40945) was registered in 2017 and renewed in 2022 by ISA and the African Mineral Development Centre of the African Union. It aims at promoting the engagement of African States in the regime of the international seabed area (the Area) and the sustainable development of the African blue economy. It is being implemented through the Africa Deep-sea Resources project with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. Four regional workshops (Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa, Mauritius and Nigeria) have been organized with almost 300 participants.

Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth (#OceanAction 40974) was registered in 2017 and renewed in 2022 by ISA and UN DESA to strengthen the capacity of Pacific small island States (Pacific SIDS) to sustainably develop and benefit from their blue economy. One scoping workshop and five regional capacity-building workshops (Tonga, Nauru, Kiribati and Cook Islands) with 30 participants have been organized to strengthen the capacity of Pacific SIDS to develop and implement appropriate enabling legal, institutional and policy frameworks for the sound and sustainable management of marine mineral resources in the Area.

Supporting ocean economies of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (#OceanAction 48513) was registered in 2022 by ISA, the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries and the Indian Ocean Rim Association with the support of Bangladesh and Singapore to assist LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in building their marine scientific capacities, particularly in highly technical areas such as deep-sea science and technology, in support of sustainable development of emerging ocean economies.



# Updates from the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030

Photo by thiago japyassu from Pexels

Proclaimed in 2017 by the United Nations General Assembly, the [UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030](#) (the Ocean Decade) seeks to stimulate ocean science and knowledge generation to reverse the decline of the state of the ocean system and catalyse new opportunities for sustainable development of this marine ecosystem. UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO) is tasked with coordinating the implementation of the Decade.

## Satellite Events for the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference

On the occasion of World Oceans Day on 8 June 2023, the Ocean Decade launched the pre-registration and call for Satellite Events for the [2024 Ocean Decade Conference](#) in Barcelona, Spain. Focused on 'delivering the science we need for the ocean we want', the event will be hosted on 10-12 April 2024 at the Barcelona International Convention Centre and will be part of an Ocean Decade Week that will take place in Barcelona on 8-12 April 2024. Join us and play your part in building the Ocean Decade roadmap to 2030!

Among other key topics, the Conference will provide a forum to discuss the results of the [Ocean Decade Vision 2030 process](#) and its related set of white papers. Structured around the [10 Decade Challenges](#), this strategic ambition-setting mechanism will take stock of current trends, gaps and priority user needs, and identify key targets and milestones to measure progress and enhance collective impact of the Ocean Decade.

## Decade Actions

[47 new Decade Actions](#) have received official endorsement to strengthen the momentum for ocean knowledge-based solutions. Spanning all continents from Canada and Liberia to France and the Philippines, these Actions address priority ocean science issues, such as community resilience to ocean hazards, creation of a digital representation of the ocean, sustainable ocean economy, ocean literacy and capacity development. To date, the Ocean Decade portfolio includes 408 endorsed Decade Actions worldwide.

Visit the [Ocean Decade website](#) for more information.





# Voluntary Commitments in the Spotlight

Photo by J. Marssee from Pexels

➤ ***Promoting deep-sea literacy in support of inclusive stewardship of the area and its resources for the benefit of humankind, [48514](#)***

In September 2022, the International Seabed Authority endorsed a new voluntary commitment: “Promoting deep-sea literacy in support of inclusive stewardship of the area and its resources for the benefit of humankind”. ISA is working to enhance the cooperation with international and regional scientific communities to promote deep-sea literacy for all ages, in all States, especially LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

ISA already launched two projects to promote deep-sea literacy.

- [Discover the Seabed with Olivia](#) is a digital activity for children between 4 and 12 years old to learn about the deep sea, its creatures and environment and the work of ISA to explore and protect them. The activity is available in Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Tongan.
- The activity book [Life Under Water](#) is developed in cooperation with an accredited Jamaican preschool providing learning in English, French and Spanish – the three main languages spoken in the

Caribbean – to teach children the need to protect and sustainably use the ocean and its resources. This voluntary commitment is contributing to the achievement of the following Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

➤ ***MBRC the Ocean Cleaning Hub, Indonesia, MBRC the Ocean Foundation (NGO), [50053](#)***

MBRC the Ocean gives the local communities – residents of the islands of West Flores and Komodo – an alternative to incinerating their waste. By providing garbage bags for their daily waste, the residents can separate their household waste into recyclables and non-recyclables directly at home, disposing of them in the waste bins provided in central locations by MBRC. The waste is collected on a regular basis and stored in the cleaning hub’s storage facility. This initiative also organizes cleanup events regularly. The collected waste is gathered, sorted, counted, weighed and placed in the cleaning hub’s storage facility and then transported by sea to Java, where the closest certified recycling company is situated. To raise awareness of waste, recycling and

sustainability, MBRC has introduced an educational programme in the local schools, supporting the local communities so that they can understand the impact of plastic waste on the marine environment and on their lives. Currently active in seven locations on the islands, the aim is to expand to 200 communities in the archipelago by 2030.

➤ ***Thailand's contribution to global effort on observation and research in response to ocean acidification, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand, [48632](#)***

In close collaboration with the regional framework of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (IOC-WESTPAC), Thailand has taken part in the establishment of the ocean acidification (OA) programme. The programme supports capacity development based on the best practices of the acidity of seawater (pH) and related carbonate parameters. So far, Thailand has actively participated in the programme and developed Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) for carbonate chemistry analysis and biodiversity monitoring in the coral reef ecosystem. Based on the developed SOP, the OA monitoring programme has been implemented at agreed suite of representative stations. As a result, several permanent OA observation stations were set up accordingly. The generated data and information from the observation sites have been contributed and shared through the implementation of UNESCO-IOC. In this regard, Thailand commits to continue its effort in contributing the observation

programme of carbonate chemistry in Thai waters to support the implementation of SDG 14.3. The scope of activities set forth in this commitment will also promote the development and advancement in ocean science research as reflected in the indicator 14.a.

➤ ***Supporting sustainable and emerging ocean economies of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, International Seabed Authority, [48513](#)***

Constraints in technical, institutional and financial capacities can act as impediments for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to effectively participate in ocean science and benefit fully from the rights recognized to them in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), on the basis of which they can develop sustainable ocean-based economies. In accordance with its mandate under UNCLOS and the therein recognized specific provisions and rights for developing States, a key responsibility of ISA is to design and implement mechanisms for building and developing the capacity of its members, in particular the geographically disadvantaged States including LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. This voluntary commitment by ISA aims to strengthen LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean region in building their marine scientific research capacities, particularly in highly technical areas, such as coastal engineering, satellite oceanography, deep-sea science and technology, in support of sustainable development of emerging ocean economies. Implementation of capacity development initiatives for personnel from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in ocean science with a focus on deep-sea science and

technology as well as in law of the sea and ocean governance is planned for 2023 and 2024. This initiative will also ensure gender parity in all capacity-building activities. Indian Ocean Rim Association is a partner of this initiative.

➤ ***Taking action to increase mangrove habitat 20 per cent by 2030, (Global Mangrove Alliance), [40692](#)***

The mission of the Global Mangrove Alliance is to increase the global area of mangrove habitat through conservation, restoration and equitable management with goals towards 2030: halt mangrove loss, restore half of the mangroves lost and secure double the mangrove areas under different forms of protection. In 2022, an updated view of the distribution of mangrove forests was released in the Global Mangrove Watch (GMW) version 3.0. The GMA actively advocates for the achievement of the SDGs and Rio Conventions through mangrove action, including through the Ramsar Convention, the Paris Agreement (NDCs, climate change adaptation and mitigation) and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Building on the GMA goals, the Mangrove Breakthrough was launched at UNFCCC COP 27 as a community of action by state and non-state actors dedicated to sustainably managing and increasing mangrove cover by 2030 by catalyzing a USD 4 billion shared global goal. Ahead of UNFCCC COP 28, the Mangrove Breakthrough expects to accelerate implementation, launch new funding structures and identify additional key actors for this international community, underpinned by principles that will guide

impacts for climate, biodiversity and livelihoods.

➤ ***Save Our Mangroves Now!, [42426](#)***

The Save Our Mangroves Now! (SOMN) initiative has been working to protect Western Indian Ocean mangroves since its establishment in 2016. Bringing together governments, conservation specialists and coastal communities, the initiative aims to reverse the decline of WIO mangroves in Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and Tanzania to restore biodiversity, protect livelihoods and mitigate against the impacts of the climate crisis. It is a joint initiative by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Worldwide Fund (WWF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Wetlands International. This report, published in October 2022, offers an overview of the work by the SOMN initiative in the region, bringing together data on extent, loss and gains, and the socio-economic value of mangroves in the region, as well as governance challenges and policy opportunities. This work will continue through 2025.

## **Other Voluntary Commitments**

- Promulgation of a regulation aiming to extend three national parks on the marine part, [47891](#)
- Addressing systemic inequity in ocean science capacity through EquiSea, [47892](#)
- Viet Nam proactively prepares and participates in the development of a global treaty on marine plastic pollution, [47893](#)

- Sweden supports The Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation to raise awareness on littering and plastic pollution, [47889](#)
- Sierra Leone Life-Saving Society/Center for Sustainable Blue Economy Development, [48356](#)
- Norway will continue to raise awareness by seeking support to the International Declaration on transnational organized crime in the global fishing industry (Copenhagen Declaration) and address these challenges through the Blue Justice Initiative, [48411](#)
- Reduce GHG emissions from international and domestic ships and ports, [48456](#)
- Ocean Conservation from youth advocacy in Asia-Pacific countries, [48458](#)
- Stakeholder conference on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, [48459](#)
- Continue supporting efforts towards a binding global instrument on plastic litter, [48460](#)
- Improving the spatial coverage, management and coherence of the Baltic Sea marine protected area network, [48463](#)
- Common understanding of the Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) criteria and identification of OECMs in the Baltic Sea region, [48464](#)
- Promoting deep-sea literacy in support of inclusive stewardship of the Area and its resources for the benefit of humankind, [48514](#)
- Supporting sustainable and emerging ocean economies of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, [48513](#)
- Canada is supporting the Global Fund for Coral Reefs and contributing \$6 million through the fund to support nature-based solutions for small island developing States and coastal developing countries, [48542](#)
- Canada joined the Clydebank Declaration at the 26th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, [48543](#)
- Canada is committed to conserving 25 per cent of our oceans by 2025, and 30 per cent by 2030, [48544](#)
- Canada is committed to the creation of the Eastern Canyons Marine Refuge, covering a 43,976 km<sup>2</sup> area off the coast of the Province of Nova Scotia, [48545](#)
- Promoting Ocean Education: Ocean Bachelor – meet the Ocean now!, [46768](#)
- Canada is investing \$183.1 million over five years, to reduce plastic waste and increase plastic circularity by developing and implementing regulatory measures, and conducting scientific research to inform policy-making, [48560](#)
- The Government of Canada is proud to commit \$10 million to combat ghost gear through Canada’s Ghost Gear Fund and by partnering with the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, [48561](#)
- Canada contributes \$9 million to the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance to help small island developing States and coastal developing countries increase their resilience to the impacts of climate change through nature-based solutions, [48562](#)
- Canada supports the Green Shipping Challenge to galvanize global action to decarbonize the international shipping industry, [48564](#)

- Canada is committed to introducing amendments to the Canada Shipping Act, 2001, including to enable proactive management of marine emergencies and to cover more types of pollution, [48563](#)
- Canada will disburse \$30 million under the Marine Litter Mitigation Fund, [48567](#)
- Canada joined the zero-emission shipping by 2050 initiative, [48566](#)
- Canada is committed to contributing to the International Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Network to host four virtual seminars over 2022 bringing over 70 countries and non-governmental organizations, and over 500 participants together, [48568](#)
- Canada is committed to the extension of the Dark Vessel Detection platform to support Ecuador's efforts against illegal, unreported, unregulated in the Galapagos Islands, [48569](#)
- Canada joins the Aquatic Blue Foods Coalition, [48571](#)
- Canada is hosting the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress on 3-9 February 2023 in Vancouver, which will aim to define a roadmap for achieving ocean conservation targets to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and ocean by 2030, [48570](#)
- Canada is investing an additional \$750 million over a further five years in its Global Innovation Clusters that support key sectors of Canadian advantage to build world-leading innovation ecosystems in Canada, [48573](#)
- Canada completed a \$1.7 million partnership with the non-governmental organization OceanMind to advance the use of drone technologies in combatting illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing in developing countries, [48572](#)
- Canada co-sponsored the America Alliance for the Protection of the Ocean, a Chilean initiative to establish a regional alliance for collaboration, cooperation and coordination of marine protected areas and other marine conservation measures in the Pacific, [48588](#)
- New voluntary environmental measures announced in April 2022 to reduce pollution from cruise ships operating in Canadian waters during the 2022 cruise season. The intent is to make these measures mandatory for the 2023 season and beyond, [48591](#)
- Canada is undertaking marine spatial planning processes across the country with the commitment to have four first-generation marine spatial plans by 2024, [48590](#)
- Canada is working with international partners at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to revise the Guidelines for underwater noise from marine shipping to help protect the marine environment, [48592](#)
- Founding of the IUU Fishing Action Alliance to stimulate ambition and action in the fight against illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing, [48595](#)
- Thailand's contribution to global effort on observation and research in response to ocean acidification, [48632](#)
- World Ocean Week in Xiamen, [52896](#)
- MBRC the Ocean Cleaning Hub, Indonesia, [50053](#)



UNITED NATIONS  
**OCEAN**  
CONFERENCE



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

## Editorial Notes

### More Information

[UN Ocean Conference](#)

[UN Water Conference](#)

[UN DESA Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#)

### Follow Us

Facebook: [UN Sustainable Development Platform](#)

Twitter: [@SustDev](#)

YouTube: [UN DESA Sustainable Development](#)

### Online Databases

[Registry of Voluntary Commitments](#)

[SDG Acceleration Actions](#)

[SDG Good Practices](#)

Cover photo by Kevin Kobal from Pexels

*This newsletter is compiled by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development Goals*