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2025 UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE

Global Online Stakeholder Consultation:

Inputs to Ocean Action Panels' Concept Papers

**SUMMARY
REPORT
OCTOBER 2024**



Acknowledgements

This report provides a summary of the inputs received from a broad range of stakeholders through an online consultation organized by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) ahead of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference. Drafting was prepared by Adam Stickney, Margaux Bouniol, Nitya Sudarshan, Suraya Rahim, and Vivien Viera Schnitzler.

Revision: Lineke Wang Schrijver and Naiara Costa

Design and layout: Adam Stickney, Margaux Bouniol, and Vivien Viera Schnitzler

Cover photo: Sina Ritter (World Oceans Day)

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Contents

Background	3
Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Inputs to the Ocean Action Panels' Concept Papers	4
Summary of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation	6
Stakeholder Inputs to Ocean Action Panels:	
1. Conserving, sustainably managing, and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems	10
2. Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology, and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health	13
3. Mobilizing finance for ocean actions in support of SDG 14	16
4. Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities	18
5. Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers	21
6. Advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport, and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind	24
7. Leveraging ocean, climate, and biodiversity interlinkages	27
8. Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level	30
9. Promoting the role of sustainable food from the ocean for poverty eradication and food security	33
10. Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UNCLOS	37

Background

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [A/RES/78/128](#) of 21 December 2023, 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” ([2025 United Nations Ocean Conference](#)) will be held from 9 June to 13 June 2025, in Nice, France. The overall theme of the Conference is: “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean.” France and Costa Rica are the co-hosts of this Conference.

Member States have called for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference to involve “all relevant stakeholders, bringing together Governments, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, other interested international bodies, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities and other actors to assess challenges and opportunities relating to, as well as actions taken towards, the implementation of Goal 14.” (A/RES/78/128, para. 4)

The programme of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference will include 10 plenary sessions and 10 Ocean Action Panels which will be collaborative and multi-stakeholder in nature and will focus on recommendations to support the implementation

of SDG 14, including through strengthened cooperation, building on existing successful partnerships and stimulating innovative and concrete new ones, taking into account the theme of the Conference.

In preparation for the Conference, the Secretary-General of the Conference will prepare, in consultation with the co-hosts of the Conference, concept papers for each of the themes of the Ocean Action panels, with inputs from Member States and the UN system. Resolution A/RES/78/128, op 24 also indicates that stakeholders, as referred in paragraph 4 (d), should also submit their inputs.

Between 26 July and 30 August 2024, stakeholders were invited to participate in a global online stakeholder consultation organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) to contribute inputs to the concept papers for the Ocean Action Panels of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference. A total of 420 stakeholders’ submissions from stakeholders based in 90 countries were received. All inputs are available [here](#). For details about the global online stakeholder consultation, check [here](#).

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the key messages from the global online stakeholder consultation, along with relevant links to all submitted responses.



Global Online Stakeholder Consultation:

Inputs to the Ocean Action Panels' Concept Papers

Stakeholders were invited to contribute inputs to the concept papers of the Ocean Action Panels of the Conference through a global online stakeholder consultation which was held from 26 July to 30 August 2024. Information about the global consultation was broadly disseminated through mailing lists, UN official websites, social media channels and a [dedicated webpage](#).

Stakeholders were invited to provide inputs on the substantive contributions to the Ocean Action Panels considering status and trends, challenges and opportunities, possible areas for new partnerships as well as recommendations on advancing implementation of SDG 14.

Stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and other actors were all invited to provide inputs on each of the ten themes of the Ocean Action Panels of the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference, as listed below:

- 1 Conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems.
- 2 Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health.
- 3 Mobilizing finance for ocean actions in the support of SDG14.
- 4 Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities.
- 5 Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers.
- 6 Advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind
- 7 Leveraging ocean, climate and biodiversity interlinkages.
- 8 Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level.
- 9 Promoting the role of sustainable food from the ocean for poverty eradication and food security.
- 10 Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UNCLOS.

Consultation Questions

Under each theme of the ten Ocean Action Panels, stakeholders were invited to provide inputs through a dedicated online form to **three questions**:

1

Please, share one transformative action that needs to happen, and by whom, to overcome the challenges and to create better conditions to accelerate progress in achieving the theme.

2

Considering the proposed theme, what evidence can you share of new ways of working/new approaches/partnerships that have proved helpful to support accelerated implementation of SDG 14? Please indicate the name of the initiative/approach, and if possible, evidence of the results achieved, leadership provided, stakeholders involved and ways of collaboration.

3

Can you propose one or two keywords that come to your mind related to this theme?



Summary of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation

A total of 420 inputs were received from interested stakeholders. The detailed responses received under each theme are available for public viewing through the links listed below. All inputs submitted by stakeholders are publicly available and can be consulted at [this website](#).

	Ocean Action Panels	Outcome of Online Consultations
1	Conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems.	Link
2	Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health.	Link
3	Mobilizing finance for ocean actions in the support of SDG14.	Link
4	Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities.	Link
5	Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers.	Link
6	Advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind.	Link
7	Leveraging ocean, climate and biodiversity interlinkages.	Link
8	Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level.	Link
9	Promoting the role of sustainable food from the ocean for poverty eradication and food security.	Link
10	Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UNCLOS. Mobilizing finance for ocean actions in the support of SDG14.	Link



Contributions originated from all six regions of the world, with the following distribution (Figure 1): Africa – 56.2%, Europe – 48.8%, Asia – 43.1%, Latin America and Caribbean – 38.8%, North America – 33.1%, and Oceania – 29.8%.

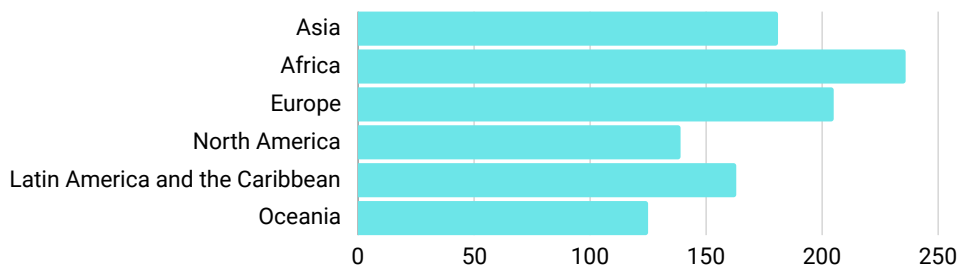
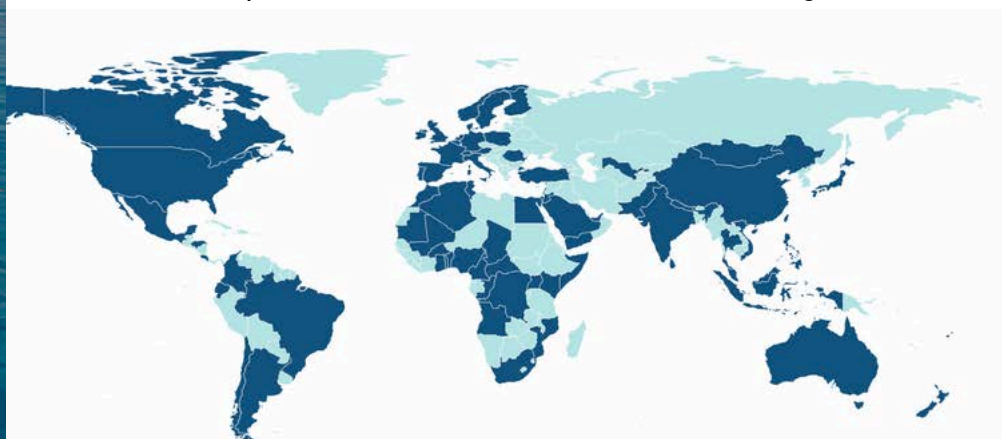


Figure 1: Distribution of submissions per region.
Source: UN DESA

Stakeholders from **90 countries** submitted contributions (Figure 2): Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica,



United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Yemen.

Figure 2: Geographic distribution of submissions.
Source: UN DESA



Credits: Sudarshan Sampathkumar

- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Business & Industry
- Education & Academic Entities
- Other Stakeholders
- Science & Technological Community
- Children & Youth
- Women's Organizations
- Local and Regional Governments
- Private Philanthropic Organizations
- Indigenous Peoples
- Volunteer Groups
- Workers and Trade Unions
- Older Persons

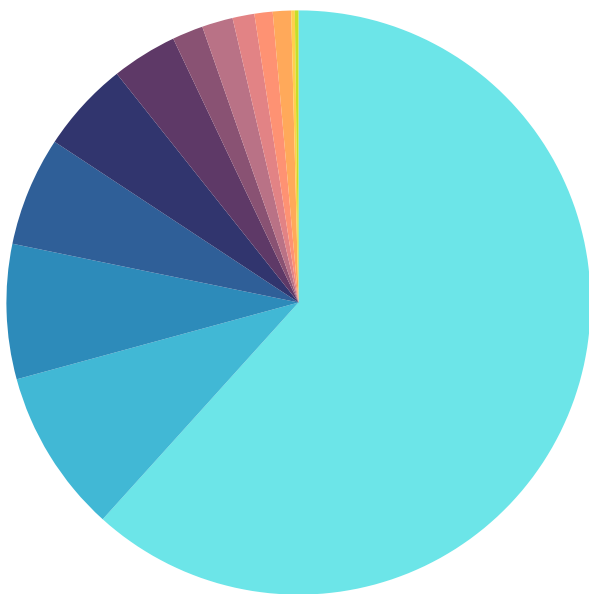


Figure 3: Distribution of submissions per sector.
Source: UN DESA

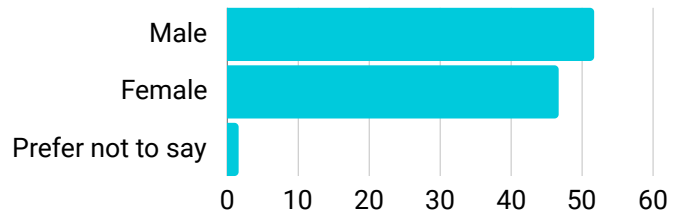


Figure 4: Gender distribution of submissions.
Source: UN DESA

The majority of stakeholders contributing to the online consultation self-identified as representing Non-Governmental Organizations (61.2%). Other sectors include: Business & Industry (9%); Education & Academic Entities (7.4%); Other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development (6%); Science & Technological Community (5%); Children & Youth (3.6%); Women Organizations (1.7%) Local and Regional Governments (1.7%); Private Philanthropic Organization (1.2%); Farmers (1.2%); Indigenous Peoples (1%); Volunteer Groups (0.7%) Workers & Trade Unions (0.2%); and Older Persons (0.2%).

With regards to gender, 51.7% of contributors self-identified as male, followed by 46.7% female and 1.7% preferred not to say (Figure 4). With regards to age, 4.5% of submissions were provided by youth (between 18 and 24 years old)

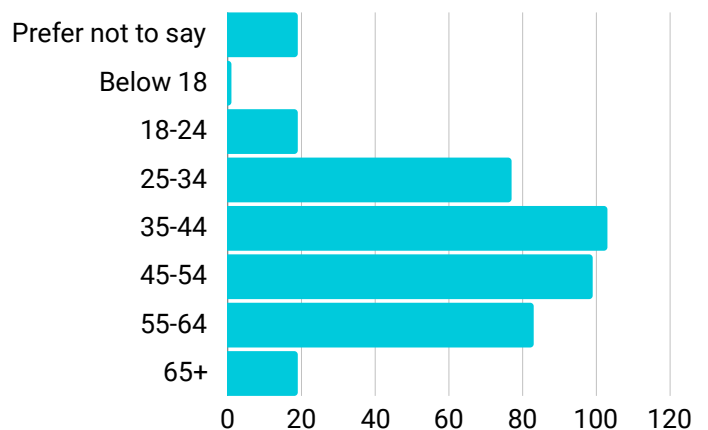


Figure 5: Age distribution of submissions.
Source: UN DESA

Stakeholders were asked to select up to three Ocean Action Panels that are currently most relevant and pressing for their organisation.

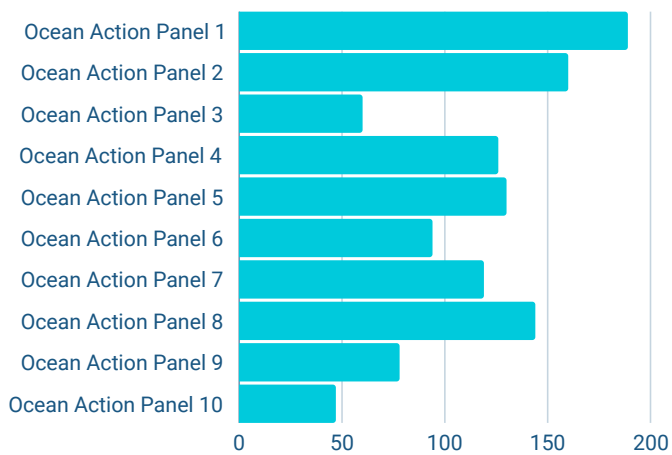


Figure 6: Number of Ocean Action Panels selected as most relevant to Stakeholders' Organization.
Source: UN DESA

The **top three Ocean Action Panel's** chosen by the majority of stakeholders were:

Ocean Action Panel 1: Conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems.

Ocean Action Panel 2: Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health.

Ocean Action Panel 8: Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level.



Ocean Action Panel 1:

Conserving, sustainably managing, and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems

Under this topic, 240 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

Stakeholders across various sectors highlighted key challenges in achieving sustainable ocean management, with a particular focus on accessibility, governance, and inclusion. One major concern is the **limited access to marine research and deep-sea exploration** for countries in the Global South and other low-income regions. Financial constraints restrict these nations' participation in crucial scientific research, creating a knowledge gap that negatively impacts effective policymaking and conservation efforts.

Many respondents raised concerns about the growing interest in deep-sea mining, with multiple stakeholders calling for a **ban or moratorium** due to the potential risks to fragile deep-sea ecosystems. However, some stakeholders expressed support for **regulated deep-sea mining**, provided that strict environmental monitoring and safeguards are in place.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing also emerged as a pressing issue, with stakeholders alarmed by its devastating impact on marine ecosystems. **Overfishing, bottom-trawling, turtle poaching, and bycatch** were identified by stakeholders as destructive practices contributing to biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

"We believe that fixing overfishing is the single most powerful thing we can do to overcome the ocean emergency. And we believe that this has to start with tackling the industrial-scale fishing methods that do the most damage." (Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition by Blue Ventures)

Transformative Actions

One of the transformative actions proposed by stakeholders is the establishment of a **global network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**. This initiative would aim to enhance marine conservation by ensuring that MPAs are subject to **strict protection measures and robust monitoring**. By creating a more comprehensive and coordinated network, nations can work together to safeguard critical marine ecosystems and biodiversity on a global scale. Stakeholders emphasized the need for MPAs to be effectively managed through a **collaborative effort between governments and local communities**.

"One transformative action is the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with strict enforcement, led by national governments in collaboration with local communities and international organizations. These MPAs should include deep-sea ecosystems and prioritize both conservation and sustainable use. Local communities must be actively involved in the management and monitoring of these areas" (World Environment Council)

The creation of **an international platform for data collection and sharing** was also highlighted as essential to improving marine research, monitoring, and enforcement. Such a platform would enable the **exchange of vital information, facilitate collaborative research, and support the fight against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing**. This would be a significant step toward making marine conservation efforts more efficient and effective worldwide.

“One transformative action... is the establishment of a "Global Marine Data Sharing and Monitoring Network" (GMDMN). This initiative, spearheaded by the United Nations in collaboration with international scientific organizations, governments, and private stakeholders, would develop a centralized platform integrating data from satellites, underwater drones, buoys, research vessels, and citizen science projects. By providing real-time monitoring and data collection on marine health, biodiversity, pollution levels, and human activities, the platform would ensure that the data collected is openly accessible to researchers, policymakers, and the public.” (Alliance for Climate Innovation and Ecological Action)

Inclusive governance was another central theme, with stakeholders calling for **stronger participation from local communities, including women, indigenous groups, and youth**, in marine management. By integrating traditional knowledge and local expertise into decision-making processes, conservation efforts can become more

culturally appropriate and sustainable, reflecting the needs and perspectives of those most directly impacted by marine resource management.

“We need to take action to empower communities and offer them sustainable finance mechanisms so that they can conserve and restore their local ecosystems... Governments, NGOs, and other organisations need to use their power and capacity to support communities and provide them with options to be able to sustainably manage their marine resources. To be able to make managing and restoring marine ecosystems sustainable, communities need to be fairly compensated (financially or otherwise) for their conservation and restoration efforts and provided with clear alternatives to sustain (and improve) their livelihoods and quality of life.” (Association for Coastal Ecosystem Services)

To address disparities in research capacity, stakeholders advocated for **enhanced technology transfer and capacity-building efforts**. Improving access to marine research and exploration technologies, especially for least developed countries and small island developing states, would ensure that these nations are better equipped to participate in global ocean science and contribute to the sustainable management of marine resources.



Partnership Spotlight

Malaysia’s Reef Care program appoints local island stakeholders as guardians of Marine Protected Areas. On Tioman Island in 2023, the Tioman Marine Conservation Group (TMCG) removed 6,191 kg of ghost nets, controlled Crown-of-Thorns starfish outbreaks by addressing 1,498 starfish, and rehabilitated 1,590 damaged coral fragments. This initiative demonstrates effective local involvement in marine conservation, contributing to the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems and advancing SDG 14 goals. (Submitted by Reef Check Malaysia, Malaysia)

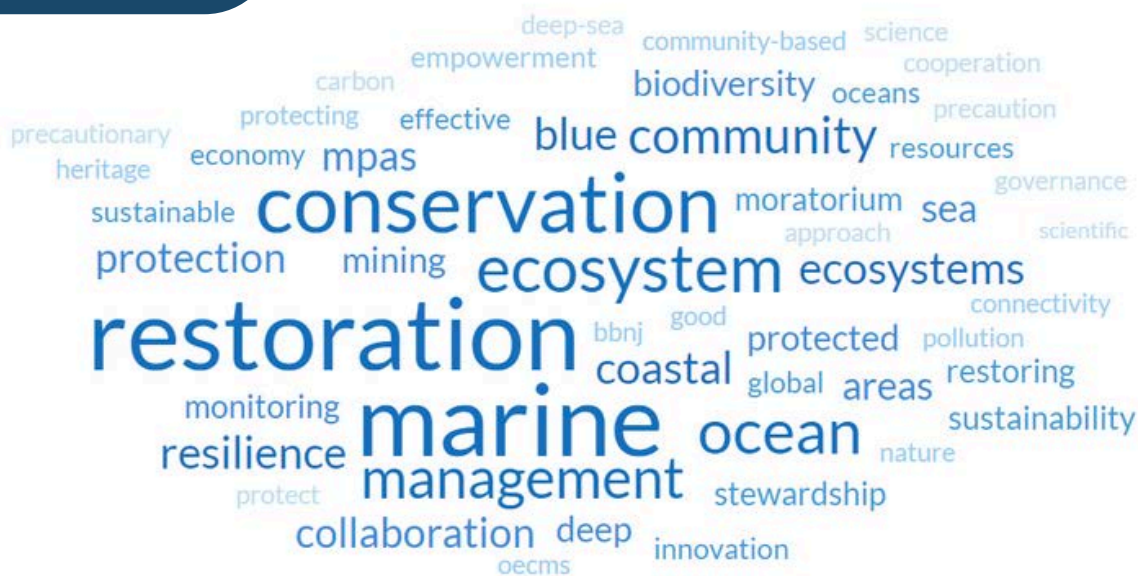


Figure 7: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 1: “Conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems.” according to stakeholders.

Source: UN DESA

“Capacities and capabilities, especially of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) & Least Developed Countries (LDCs), [must] be taken into consideration. Capacity building and accelerated technology transfer, training and education, ocean literacy are amongst the top priorities need to be affixed firmly. Scientific exchange, data co-operation and sharing, cross-cultural dialogues, adoption of traditional as well as e-learning methods etc. would ensure quality partnerships, as requisite for sustainable development of the ocean.” (Global Science Academy)

Pollution control and ecosystem restoration were also identified by stakeholders as priority areas for action. Stronger regulations are needed to address ocean pollution, particularly from plastics, fertilizer runoff, and hazardous industrial waste, which are major contributors to marine degradation.

In parallel, efforts to restore degraded marine ecosystems should be prioritized to support biodiversity and improve ocean resilience. In terms of fostering partnerships, stakeholders emphasized the importance of **strengthening ties with community-based organizations, civil society, academia, indigenous groups, and women’s organizations.** These partnerships would play a key role in advancing marine conservation goals by integrating grassroots knowledge and expertise. Additionally, international collaboration through UN bodies such as UNEP and FAO would be crucial for coordinated global action. Finally, **private sector engagement in sustainable practices and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives** is seen as an essential component of ensuring the long-term health of marine ecosystems by stakeholders.



Partnership Spotlight

The African Youths Sustainable Ocean Campaign (AYSOC) focuses on raising ocean literacy and promoting a sustainable ocean economy among African youth. Through ocean literacy campaigns, beach cleanups, and the establishment of ocean clubs in schools, AYSOC has improved awareness about marine conservation and the impacts of plastic pollution. Additionally, the initiative promotes nature-based solutions to climate change, including mangrove forest restoration. AYSOC’s efforts aim to build coastal resilience and foster a deeper understanding of the ocean’s role in sustaining livelihoods, contributing to SDG 14. (Submitted by Centre for Blue Economy Research and Development Nigeria Ltd/Gte, Nigeria)

Ocean Action Panel 2:

Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology, and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health

Under this topic, 186 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

Stakeholders from different sectors identified key challenges in strengthening the science-policy interface for ocean health, with a great focus on education, scientific networks, and streamlined and shared access to global oceanographic data.

One major concern is the **lack of ocean literacy** as an educational policy in schools worldwide. Stakeholders raised concerns as to its effectiveness in addressing the current and long-term challenges ocean health is facing in the educational system.

“To accelerate progress in increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology, and education, a key focus should be on making ocean science more accessible and relatable, especially to younger generations.” (Seaweed First)

Additionally, many respondents mentioned the **challenges in gaining and retaining talent of young professionals** wanting to pursue a career in ocean governance and policy as there is a lack of a global network to include those young professionals in.

Many stakeholders raised concerns about **the lack of transparency and accessibility in ocean-related scientific knowledge and data**.

According to respondents, it is a major challenge to find reliable data on ongoing and previous research, data, tools, and best practices.

Transformative Actions

One transformative action identified by stakeholders is the implementation of **Ocean Literacy as an educational policy in schools** to create a consistent and effective educational framework worldwide. Integrating climate and ocean education into school curricula will foster a generation of environmentally conscious citizens.

“Compulsory enforcement of climate and ocean education is crucial to address the urgent environmental challenges we face. Governments and education ministries worldwide must integrate comprehensive climate and ocean literacy into national education policies to ensure that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to protect our planet.” (Young Environmentalists Programme Trust)

Stakeholders also emphasized the creation of a **global network for early-career professionals focused on ocean governance and management**. Such a network would provide mentorship, training, and collaboration opportunities for early-career ocean policymakers, equipping them with the tools, knowledge, and connections necessary to influence ocean governance and drive innovation.

“By investing in the next generation of policy makers, this initiative would future proof the science-policy knowledge exchange and help address the current challenges in translating scientific research into effective ocean policies. It would empower young leaders to champion sustainable ocean management, ensuring that future policies are not only informed by cutting-edge science but also by the fresh perspectives and innovative ideas of early-career professionals.” (European Marine Board Secretariat)

Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of creating **open data platforms and knowledge sharing hubs** as a transformative action. This would provide all actors with **streamlined access to all available global oceanographic information in real-time**, facilitating collaboration and accelerating progress on SDG 14. Building **transdisciplinary research and data sharing** between the private and public sectors can improve ocean understanding and enable better, evidence-based ocean management.

“It should be easier to find information about which projects or research organizations are working on which topics to enable greater knowledge sharing and avoid duplication of efforts. Centralized tracking of previous or ongoing research and data would allow greater collaboration and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned, best practices and tools, models and techniques.” (Nestlé Purina Petcare Europe)

Several stakeholders highlighted the need for a **collective global participatory science among stakeholders as a transformative action. Participatory science projects would enhance ocean-related scientific cooperation**, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology and education, and strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health.

“By engaging local communities in data collection and monitoring, these projects empower residents to manage their coastal environments, tailoring conservation to regional needs. Collaborative platforms connect citizens, scientists, policymakers, and NGOs, facilitating knowledge and resource sharing. Standardized data protocols support comprehensive databases for large-scale analysis. Educational components raise awareness, fostering public support and robust community engagement.” (Objectif Sciences International)

According to stakeholders, such **Participatory Science Network would involve partnerships** between national agencies, research institutions, and international organizations, and would demonstrate effective collaboration in marine science with local communities.

Stakeholders emphasized that **diversity, equity, and inclusion in ocean science** is a transformative action at the national and international levels.



Partnership Spotlight

Being a global, multi-institutional partnership, the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership has demonstrated effectiveness in supporting the implementation of SDG 14. GOAP brings together governments, international organizations and research institutions to develop and implement ocean accounting practices. The partnership's activities provide data and analytical tools that support evidence-based decision-making across all SDG 14 targets. For example, ocean accounts can help track progress on conserving coastal areas (14.5), regulating fishing practices (14.4), and assessing the economic benefits of sustainable marine resource use (14.7). It also contributes to other SDGs, such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), by highlighting connections between ocean health and broader sustainable development objectives. (Submitted by the UNSW Centre for Sustainable Development Reform).



Figure 8: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 2: “Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health.” according to stakeholders. Source: UN DESA

Achieving diversity, equity and inclusion in ocean science will build a broader and more international base of capacity and expertise related to the oceans and contribute to more effective ocean science for policy efforts in all countries bordering the world's oceans.

“Past international science collaborations have often been led from the global north and inadequately included and supported local researchers. This leads to parachute science and the perpetuation of capacity gaps in less developed countries.” (WWF)

Finally, stakeholders emphasized the need for increased investment in **ocean technology and the creation of global ocean research and technology hubs** to improve ocean monitoring and data collection. Powerful digital methods such as GeoAnalytics, Geo visualization, GeoDesign and Ocean Digital Twins were highlighted.

“Digital technologies like Digital Twins of the oceans should be funded generously to accelerate the pace of understanding of the oceans natural analogs and their impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems of the blue world.” (Geo-Tech Consultancy Services)

Partnership Spotlight

The Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiatives (DOSI) is a network of interdisciplinary researchers from across the world, who collaborate on deep-ocean research and science-policy engagement, including through enabling the participation of scientists from across geographical locations, career stages, and backgrounds at key policy events, meetings, and knowledge-exchange initiatives. (Submitted by Geo-Tech Consultancy Services; Deep Sea Conservation Coalition; Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative - DOSI)

Ocean Action Panel 3:

Mobilizing finance for ocean actions in support of SDG 14

Under this topic, 121 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

Many stakeholders emphasized the critical need for **more financial resources** to drive ocean conservation efforts. The challenge lies in securing **adequate, long-term funding to support initiatives**, particularly in coastal restoration, marine conservation, and sustainable development projects.

“Practitioners, researchers, traditional owners, communities, industry and others should investigate innovative financial mechanisms for restoration which consider the advantages and disadvantages of a range of financing options, including blended funding models which offers a future path to engage the financial sector in restor-

ation to address risk and identifying and implementing learnings from successful international large-scale funding models.” (Africa Sustainable Climate and Environment Foundation)

Several stakeholders pointed out the need for **increased awareness and knowledge dissemination**, particularly targeting younger generations and local communities. Without widespread understanding of sustainable practices and ocean conservation needs, it becomes difficult to foster long-term engagement and behavioral change.

According to stakeholders, **building strong and effective partnerships across countries and regions** is essential for driving comprehensive ocean conservation strategies. However, stakeholders noted that the pace of forming these collaborations has been too slow, which impedes



Partnership Spotlight

The [AIS Forum on Adjustment of Blue Economy Development Index](#) supports the adjustment and enhancement of the Blue Economy Development Index (BEDI) under the AIS Forum, which currently includes 22 out of 51 member countries. The partnership aims to expand the BEDI framework from the macro level to the meso level, allowing individual countries to adopt and tailor the index to their national blue economy goals. Financially, this partnership focuses on leveraging both public and private funding sources to support the shift from macroeconomic measurements to more granular, country-specific economic indicators. By increasing investment transparency and adaptability, the partnership contributes to SDG 14 by enabling countries to better measure and track their sustainable marine economy. (Submitted by HACOSTA)

large-scale progress in protecting marine ecosystems. Stakeholders also mentioned how **outdated or fragmented regulations, coupled with slow-moving policy frameworks**, are major obstacles to advancing ocean conservation. Stakeholders identified the need for better governance structures, streamlined policies, and international cooperation to overcome these barriers.

"Innovations in financing mechanisms are required for achieving a healthy and sustainably managed ocean. Challenges in blue finance include creating an enabling policy environment, community involvement, enhancing the role of commercial banks, and addressing sustainability and project impacts. Blending financing, ensuring ownership, and building capacity are also hurdles. Solutions involve engaging with financial facilities like the African Bank and the World Bank to support ocean conservation through investable programmes, which is not yet successfully adapted for smaller scale initiatives." (Marine Regions Forum)

Transformative Actions

Stakeholders mentioned the **importance of involving corporate entities through CSR initiatives**. By engaging private sector actors, ocean conservation efforts can gain access to additional funding and resources, accelerating progress. They also mentioned the vast financial resources required to shift toward a sustainable blue economy, urging stakeholders **to invest in solutions that regenerate marine ecosystems and address long-term risks**. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of **international collaboration to significantly increase financial commitments** to climate and biodiversity goals. Redirecting financial flows toward nature-positive investments is essential for achieving SDG 14.

"Countries must close the climate and biodiversity finance gaps, including by agreeing a New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance that goes far beyond the current \$100 billion, and by redirecting financial flows in nature-positive ways." (The Nature Conservancy)



Figure 9: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 3: "Mobilizing finance for ocean actions in the support of SDG14." according to stakeholders. Source: UN DESA



Partnership Spotlight

The IUCN CEC/UNESCO Earth Network/Ocean Literacy Global Taskforce focuses on funding and supporting nature conservation through various international initiatives. By collaborating with global organizations, such as UNESCO and UNEP, the taskforce aims to advance ocean literacy and generate financial support for conservation projects. By leveraging international funding channels, this initiative contributes to SDG 14 by promoting sustainable use of marine resources and raising awareness about marine ecosystems. (Submitted by IUCN CEC/UNESCO Earth Network/Ocean Literacy Global Taskforce)



Ocean Action Panel 4:

Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities

Under this topic, 179 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

A major challenge is the need for stronger environmental regulations related to reducing marine pollution. Numerous stakeholders highlighted the critical role of policy reforms in reducing ocean pollution, especially from plastic waste. However, the inadequate enforcement of current regulations remains a substantial obstacle.

A further challenge is **the global nature of marine pollution, which demands collaborative international efforts**. Many organizations highlighted the need for a global plastic pollution reduction pact and emphasized the importance of international cooperation to establish effective waste management systems and promote public awareness. However, achieving consensus among nations with differing priorities and capacities presents a significant challenge. Moreover, **the adoption of circular economy models**, while advocated by many stakeholders, faces obstacles in terms of policy integration and the development of sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics at both the local and global levels.

Transformative Actions

Multiple stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen environmental regulations and policies related to plastic pollution.

They highlighted the importance of **reinforcing regulatory frameworks** to mitigate ocean pollution, with organizations focusing on advancing policy reforms for environmental protection.

"We should strengthen environmental regulation policies by implementing strict regulations to reduce the discharge of pollutants into rivers and oceans. This includes industrial waste, wastewater and agricultural chemicals." (Humanity for the World)

Several stakeholders stressed the potential of **community-driven projects**. These efforts encompass **clean-up activities, community education, and participation in international negotiations on plastic pollution**. Stakeholders emphasized that these initiatives would be particularly effective in **coastal cities and communities**.

"Implementing a "Zero-Waste Coastal Cities Initiative" can reduce land-based pollution by promoting waste management and recycling systems in coastal urban areas. Local governments can implement and enforce waste management policies. The private sector could develop and support innovative waste reduction technologies. NGOs can raise awareness and provide community support". (The Bharat Scouts Guides, WOSM World Organisation of Scout Movement, WWF Youngo and Indian youth for climate network UNICEF)

Many stakeholders called for the immediate enhancement of civil society organizations (CSO) focused on addressing marine pollution. Stakeholders advocated for increased CSO involvement in **raising awareness and implementing preventive measures** against pollution.

“The acceleration of CSO activities in prevention and the promotion of good practices around marine and coastal ecosystems must be revitalized.” (Afrique Esperance NGO)

Some organizations pushed for the **ban of harmful products** like cigarette filters and single-use vaping devices. They argued that removing these items from circulation would significantly reduce marine litter and pollution.

“By all accounts, pollution degrades and denatures ecosystems. The simplest way to eliminate this problem is to prevent plastics from entering the ocean, since single-use plastics such as cutlery, bottles, straws, cotton buds, and cigarette filters are responsible for 50% of marine pollution.” (Union des Amis Socio Culturels d’Action en Développement)

Stakeholders underscored the importance of **technology and conservation zones** in combating pollution. For example, participants advocated for innovative technological solutions to monitor ocean health and establish marine conservation zones aimed at protecting vulnerable ecosystems

and promoting sustainable marine resource management.

“By harnessing the power of continuous, data-driven, autonomous cleanup, we can significantly reduce the amount of plastic entering our oceans and restore the health of marine and coastal ecosystems.” (Clean Sea Solutions)

Several organizations promoted the idea of a **global plastic pollution reduction pact**. They emphasized the need for comprehensive national action plans and strengthened international cooperation, with a focus on **increased investment in sustainable waste management systems**, public awareness campaigns, and the promotion of eco-friendly practices to reduce environmental impact and encourage responsible waste disposal. In addition, stakeholders stressed the importance of **international collaboration and policy development for marine conservation**. They highlighted the role of **cross-border partnerships** in tackling cross-border pollution and safeguarding the sustainability of shared marine resources.

“Marine pollution, particularly from plastics, poses a significant threat to ocean health. A binding agreement can drive concerted action and accountability among nations to tackle this urgent issue. By uniting countries under a common goal, this initiative can lead to significant reductions in marine pollution, protecting ocean ecosystems and promoting sustainable practices.” (World Muslim Congress)



Partnership Spotlight

The [Ocean Cleanup](#) is a leading initiative that has demonstrated new ways of working to accelerate the implementation of SDG 14 by addressing marine pollution through innovative technology and partnerships. The project focuses on removing plastic from oceans and rivers using passive systems and river interceptors. Successful deployments, such as in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, have removed significant amounts of plastic waste, while river interceptors have shown promising reductions in plastic flow to the oceans. These results provide evidence of how advanced, data-driven solutions can combat marine pollution effectively. The initiative’s success is fueled by strong leadership and collaboration with governments, private sector companies, NGOs, and local communities, fostering sustainability and knowledge-sharing to tackle marine pollution on a global scale. *(Submitted by Alliance for Climate Innovation and Ecological Action)*

Some stakeholders advocated for nature-based solutions, such as replanting mangroves and community gardening, to reduce pollution. These approaches, promoted by various organizations, are seen as essential for restoring marine ecosystems and strengthening biodiversity.

"Pollution control and nature-based solutions, such as constructed wetlands, are effective measures, requiring stakeholder engagement and policy frameworks" (Marine Regions Forum, Research Institute for Sustainability - Helmholtz Centre Potsdam, RIFS).

Numerous organizations highlighted the importance of **empowering local communities** in sustainable waste management practices. By **raising awareness and involving communities in decision-making**, these efforts aim to reduce the harmful effects of pollution on local ecosystems.

"Community empowerment and education, paired with sustainable waste management initiatives, can reduce pollution and mitigate the negative impacts on local ecosystems" (Svyam Bane Gopal)

Several participants advocated for the adoption of **circular economy principles** as a solution to plastic pollution. They focused on recycling and innovative alternatives to single-use plastics, emphasizing the need to integrate these approaches into policy frameworks at the local and global levels. Stakeholders pointed out the potential of **extended producer responsibility** as a policy tool for implementing these principles.

"By establishing and promoting Extended Producer Responsibility programs globally, this action would significantly reduce marine pollution from land-based activities, particularly plastic waste, and create a more sustainable and circular economy." (IOI Ocean Academy Singapore)



Figure 10: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 4: "Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities." according to stakeholders. Source: UN DESA

Partnership Spotlight

The Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) is a leading multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at reducing marine pollution, significantly advancing the implementation of SDG 14. Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the GPML has facilitated key projects, such as the Clean Seas Campaign, which has gained commitments from over 60 countries to reduce plastic waste. This has led to notable achievements, including national bans on single-use plastics and measurable reductions in plastic waste. The GPML fosters collaboration across governments, the private sector, NGOs, and research institutions, demonstrating strong leadership and multi-sector engagement to combat marine litter. *(Submitted by Babatunde Development and Empowerment Initiative; Qaid a Azam University, Islamabad; Wright, Butler & Co; World Environment Council; Major Group of Children and Youth; University of Cape Coast; IOI Ocean Academy Singapore; GARP Hosting)*

Ocean Action Panel 5:

Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers

Under this topic, 217 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

Stakeholders across various sectors identified significant challenges to achieving sustainable fisheries management, with a strong focus on difficulties related to economic barriers, governance, and representation of small-scale fishers. One prominent issue raised was the **lack of financial resources and access to markets** for small-scale fishers, limiting their ability to adopt sustainable practices and improve their livelihoods. The economic gap often forces these fishers into unsustainable practices to meet short-term needs, undermining long-term ocean health and resilience.

A primary concern identified by stakeholders is **inadequate involvement of small-scale fishers** in decision-making processes. In many regions, industrial fishing operations dominate fisheries management, leaving small-scale fishers marginalized despite their crucial role in food security and marine stewardship.

“Small-scale fisherwomen and fishermen have been absent in spaces where policies that affect their livelihoods, cultures, well-being, and rights are deliberated and decided.” (Village Farmers Initiative)

Another challenge was **overfishing** and the widespread use of unsustainable **destructive fishing practices** such as bottom trawling and high bycatch levels. Overfishing continues to deplete fish stocks, with industrial fishing disproportionately contributing to the degradation of marine ecosystems.

“Without abundant and sustainable fish populations, the fisheries that depend on them will, inevitably and predictably, decline. Overexploitation of the seas is not an unintentional byproduct but a very deliberate and systematic approach that countries around the world have allowed to happen.” (Blue Marine Foundation)



Partnership Spotlight

The [Coastal Guardian Watchmen](#) integrates traditional Indigenous knowledge with scientific monitoring to manage and protect coastal and marine resources. This initiative trains Indigenous youth in both traditional and modern conservation techniques, empowering them as stewards of their local marine environments. By combining cultural heritage with scientific methods, the program strengthens local capacity for sustainable management and contributes to both environmental conservation and cultural preservation. (Submitted by O'KANATA)

Transformative Actions

Many respondents emphasized the need for community-based fisheries management that actively involves local fishers in decision-making processes as a transformative action. Co-management systems, where the government, local communities, and other stakeholders collaborate, were cited as highly effective in promoting sustainable practices and resource conservation.

“A transformative action is to fully integrate the fishing community into every aspect of the fisheries management process. This includes involving community scientists and fishers in monitoring efforts, embracing co-management frameworks, and implementing community-based natural resource management strategies.” (Coral Reef Alliance)

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of expanding **financial services** for small-scale fisheries, such as encouraging **private-sector investment** and establishing a **Global Fund**. These services would help mitigate the financial risks associated with climate change and unpredictable weather patterns, allowing fishers to invest in more sustainable practices. Stakeholders mentioned that the creation of a global fund managed by international bodies like the FAO, specifically dedicated to small-scale fishers, could provide financial support, capacity-building opportunities, and technical assistance.

“One transformative action that needs to happen is the redirection of subsidies from industrial fisheries towards supporting small-scale fishers, particularly in the Global South. Governments and international bodies should prioritize funding and capacity-building for small-scale fisheries to ensure they can sustainably manage marine resources.” (Greenpeace International)

Many stakeholders advocated for stronger legal frameworks to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and a reform of unsustainable fishing practices. They argue that enhanced regulatory measures, alongside improved enforcement mechanisms, would help safeguard improved enforcement mechanisms, would help safeguard marine ecosystems and ensure sustainable fisheries management. The consultation also includes voices calling for a **ban on destructive fishing practices** such as bottom trawling and deep-sea mining, emphasizing these activities cause irreversible damage to ocean ecosystems.

“The most transformative thing nations can do is deliver on their promises to end overfishing, particularly through banning practices like bottom trawling that have devastating effects on marine ecosystems.” (Blue Marine Foundation)



Partnership Spotlight

Since 2020, [The PescaData Initiative](#) has facilitated peer-to-peer learning among small-scale fishers in Latin America by allowing them to share bottom-up solutions to local challenges via a mobile app. Currently, over 2,500 users have shared more than 150 solutions, with 84% contributing directly to SDG 14 by creating community marine reserves, launching citizen science monitoring initiatives, and conducting ocean cleanups. The initiative also supports SDGs 5, 8, and 13, empowering local and indigenous communities to implement and scale locally appropriate actions to foster sustainable fisheries. (Submitted by Comunidad y Biodiversidad)

Innovative technologies such as satellite monitoring and electronic reporting systems for traceability were proposed by stakeholders as ways to enhance transparency and enforce sustainable fishing practices. These systems would provide more accurate tracking of fishing activities, helping authorities enforce regulations and protect marine resources.

“Utilizing advanced technologies like satellite monitoring, electronic reporting, and blockchain for traceability... would significantly contribute to the conservation of marine biodiversity and sustainable fisheries.” (Saudi Green Building Forum)



Figure 11: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 5: “Fostering sustainable fisheries management including supporting small-scale fishers” according to stakeholders.
Source: UN DESA



Ocean Action Panel 6:

Advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport, and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind

Under this topic, 148 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

Stakeholders across various sectors identified significant challenges to sustainable ocean management. A critical issue highlighted was the environmental impact of the shipping industry. **Noise pollution, disruptions to migratory patterns, and accidental harm to megafauna** were mentioned as major concerns. Additionally, stakeholders emphasized that pollution from **poorly managed ports and unregulated ship-breaking practices** exacerbates ocean degradation.

Stakeholders noted that many **coastal communities are ill-prepared for the consequences of sea-level rise**, and that **ecosystem collapse has begun to affect the livelihoods of small-scale fisheries** in different parts of the world, further threatening their economic and social well-being. They recommended increasing resilience through **enhancing infrastructure and adaptive spatial planning**, utilizing nature-based solutions, and developing emergency response plans.

"We cannot pursue climate mitigation in a vacuum - it must be pursued in kind with climate adaptation and resilience efforts, to ensure that these critical coastal communities will be able to survive and thrive in a climate-positive future." (High Ambition Climate Collective)

Transformative Actions

Stakeholders mentioned various potential transformative actions, such as the creation of **eco-labels and global standards** to promote sustainable shipping practices. These labels would help consumers, businesses, and actors in the eco-tourism industry identify companies that prioritize sustainable environmental practices, including pollution reduction, lower carbon emissions, and ecosystem preservation. Developing recognized standards would **hold the industry accountable, ensuring transparency and widespread adoption**. Stakeholders emphasized that collaboration between governments, international bodies, and the private sector is essential for successful implementation.

"The label fosters a sense of corporate responsibility, encouraging businesses to engage in local conservation efforts, support marine protection initiatives, and collaborate with local communities. This not only strengthens their brand but also contributes to the overall health of the coastal and marine environment." (Engaged For Ocean)

Stakeholders emphasized the need to explore **alternative fuel options for shipping** to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. As shipping is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, developing **alternatives like hydrogen, biofuels, and wind-assisted propulsion** were identified as essential for aligning with global climate goals.

Increased research and investment in cleaner technologies were deemed crucial by participants for long-term sustainability.

"This transition to zero-emission technologies and fuels is tantamount to a renaissance of the shipping industry - an opportunity to reimagine and redefine ocean shipping and its relationship not only to the climate and our health, but to our oceans and to marine biodiversity." (Natural Resources Defense Council - NRDC)

Participants also proposed **reducing the number of large-scale industrial vessels or lowering their speed** as a means to decrease environmental harm. This would lower fuel consumption and emissions, minimize the risk of collisions with marine wildlife, and reduce underwater noise pollution affecting migratory species. Additionally, this would **level the playing field for small-scale fisheries**, which have faced challenges in competing internationally. Stakeholders mentioned that implementing such measures would be **a cost-effective option** and called for **industry-wide regulations and incentives**.

"Reducing ship speed is the most immediate and cost-effective measure to mitigate the environmental impact of shipping. It requires no technological modifications and has negligible impact on the overall costs of the shipping industry." (OceanCare)

Enhancing capacity building for coastal communities, particularly those vulnerable to climate change, was identified as a priority by stakeholders. Providing training, financial support, and resources would help these communities manage local ecosystems effectively. Capacity-building efforts should focus on **sustainable fishing practices and ecosystem restoration** while empowering communities in marine resource management. Involvement and education of youth, women, and indigenous communities were also highlighted by stakeholders as vital for sustainable marine management. Stakeholders recognized these groups' cultural ties and traditional knowledge as key to effective conservation. Engaging them through education and **participation in decision-making** would enhance the cultural appropriateness and effectiveness of conservation efforts.

"Making space for small-scale fisheries and coastal communities to express their interest in being part of the sustainable ocean-based economies, and developing programs that center on their strengths and contribution." (TBTI Global Foundation)



Partnership Spotlight

The [Global Maritime Forum](#) (GMF) is driving efforts to decarbonize shipping through the development of Green Shipping Corridors. These corridors are trade routes where zero-emission technologies are implemented and supported by targeted regulatory actions, financial incentives, and collaboration among key stakeholders, including governments, ports, and companies. Notable examples include the Singapore-Rotterdam and Australia-East Asia Iron Ore Green Corridors, where GMF's Getting to Zero Coalition is facilitating the deployment of zero-emission vessels. These industry-led partnerships have shown progress in advancing sustainable maritime transport, providing evidence of effective new approaches to achieve SDG 14. (Submitted by The Global Maritime Forum, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Finally, stakeholders underscored the importance of **financial mechanisms for promoting sustainable marine management**. Increased investment in environmentally responsible projects and divestment from harmful activities were endorsed. There was an additional emphasis on supporting small-scale fisheries and local businesses. A **global fund to support sustainable maritime practices and climate-resilient coastal development** was also proposed by multiple stakeholders as a critical tool for **redirecting financial flows toward protecting marine ecosystems and supporting vulnerable communities**.

"There... needs to be political will to develop a sustainable blue economy and create enabling legislation and policy framework to remove barriers to investment. This could include supporting entrepreneurship including the support of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), introducing tax incentives, and involving savings and credit cooperative organisations and climate trust funds, promoting a blue/green transition, and supporting public private partnerships." (Marine Regions Forum)



Figure 12: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 6: "Advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, sustainable maritime transport, and coastal community resilience leaving no one behind" according to stakeholders. Source: UN DESA



Partnership Spotlight

The Sea'ties initiative, led by the Ocean & Climate Platform, supports the adaptation of coastal cities to sea level rise. It works through knowledge dissemination, experience-sharing, and political advocacy. Notable achievements include a scientific synthesis on coastal adaptation, regional workshops across Europe, Africa, and the Pacific, and the launch of the Sea'ties Declaration, backed by over 40 global leaders. Sea'ties also published policy recommendations in 2024, endorsed by 80 organizations. Building on this initiative, the Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience Coalition aims to gather 500 cities and regions to accelerate adaptation, focusing on mobilization, knowledge, and finance. (Submitted by Ocean & Climate Platform, France)

Ocean Action Panel 7:

Leveraging ocean, climate, and biodiversity interlinkages

Under this topic, 164 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

Stakeholders identified several key challenges in effectively leveraging ocean, climate and biodiversity interlinkages. A major issue highlighted was the **lack of integrated policies** that simultaneously address these interconnected domains. Stakeholders argue that the current isolated approaches have resulted in ineffective conservation efforts and slowed climate action, particularly due to **insufficient coordination across sectors and regions**.

“Ocean health, climate stability, and biodiversity are deeply interconnected, and addressing these issues in isolation can limit the effectiveness of conservation and climate action efforts.” (Major Group of Children and Youth)

Stakeholders frequently mentioned the **lack of collaboration and diversity between various ocean sectors**. They argue that not all communities are involved in the regulation and conservation of ocean biodiversity and climate, especially those most vulnerable to biodiversity loss, increased extreme weather events and rising sea levels. Those with the most knowledge and familiarity with coastal areas lack the funding or resources to effectively protect and conserve.

Another recurring theme was the **difficulty of securing sufficient financial resources** to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems effectively. Many coastal habitats, such as mangroves and seagrass beds, provide essential services that benefit both people and nature. However, investments in these ecosystems often remain insufficient.

“Nature-based solutions deliver for people, nature and the climate. We need to therefore secure unprecedented investment into the conservation and effective management of marine and coastal ecosystems to tackle the linked threats of biodiversity loss and climate change.” (WWF International)

A significant challenge raised by stakeholders is the **impact of offshore oil development on ocean ecosystems, climate regulation, and biodiversity**. The expansion of offshore oil and gas projects contributes to marine pollution and disrupts critical marine habitats, threatening species and biodiversity. Stakeholders warned that without stronger regulations and a shift away from offshore oil exploitation, the damage to marine ecosystems could be irreversible.

“The ocean crisis is inherently a climate crisis. From exploration and extraction to processing, refining, and burning fossil fuels, each phase contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions exacerbate climate change, manifesting as rising ocean temperatures, decreased productivity and resilience of marine ecosystems, and disrupted relationships between fisheries and species distribution.” (Center for International Environmental Law)

Transformative Actions

Stakeholders highlighted several transformative actions that must be undertaken to effectively leverage the interlinkages between ocean, climate, and biodiversity. Stakeholders strongly advocated for **integrated, interdisciplinary approaches** that break down silos between ocean, climate, and biodiversity policies. One transformative action is the **creation of comprehensive action plans** that simultaneously address all three areas, ensuring that solutions are mutually reinforcing and sustainable in the long term.

“One transformative action that needs to happen is the Creation of Integrated Ocean-Climate-Biodiversity Action Plans. Integrated action plans ensure that efforts to mitigate climate change, protect marine ecosystems, and conserve biodiversity are mutually reinforcing, leading to more effective and sustainable outcomes.” (Millennium Child Support Group)

Stakeholders urged the **adoption of inclusive policies** that ensure the meaningful participation of women, indigenous peoples, and local communities in decision-making processes. They argued that without diverse voices and perspectives, efforts to address these interlinkages would remain incomplete and inequitable.

“Develop and enforce policies that ensure women are included in decision-making processes related to ocean, climate, and biodiversity initiatives.” (UN Etxea - Basque Country Association for UNESCO)

Many stakeholders stressed the need for **enhanced funding mechanisms** that support cross-sectoral initiatives. These mechanisms would provide financial backing for projects that promote ecosystem resilience while addressing the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. **Investing in nature-based solutions and blue-carbon projects** was highlighted by stakeholders

“In order to accelerate progress towards planetary health, the private and public sectors must take advantage of the opportunity presented by the 2025 UN Ocean Conference to develop a framework for investment that adequately responds to the needs of all those components which comprise planetary health, simultaneously.” (Ocean Born Foundation)



Partnership Spotlight

The Blue Carbon Initiative focuses on the conservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes, to capture carbon and protect biodiversity. Coordinated by Conservation International, IUCN, and UNEP, the initiative involves governments, local communities, scientists, and NGOs. It has demonstrated significant success in carbon sequestration and enhanced ecosystem resilience, contributing to both climate action and biodiversity conservation. (Submitted by GARP Hosting and Human Rights and Forest Brain Africa)

Another transformative action urged by stakeholders is the **eradication of offshore oil**. Stakeholders stressed that **fossil fuel extraction exacerbates both ocean degradation and climate change**. Halting these activities would significantly **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** and **protect marine ecosystems** from harmful practices such as oil spills and ocean acidification.

“The most transformative action needed is to halt offshore oil and gas activities entirely. As the climate emergency intensifies, protecting our oceans is more crucial than ever. This collective effort is vital for restoring ocean resilience, preserving biodiversity, and addressing the climate crisis effectively.” (Quantum Leap)

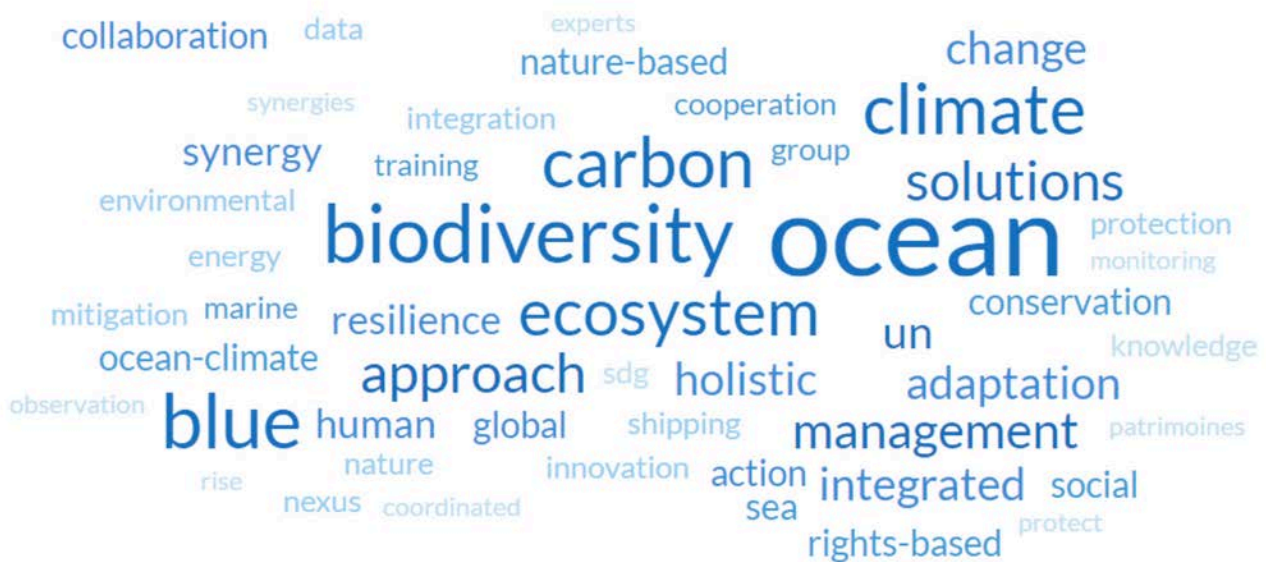


Figure 13: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 7: “Leveraging ocean, climate, and biodiversity interlinkages” according to stakeholders. Source: UN DESA



Partnership Spotlight

The [Reef Resilience Network](#) aims to improve coral reef health globally through restoration and resilience projects. These efforts protect marine biodiversity and strengthen coastal resilience against climate change. The network collaborates with local governments, NGOs, and scientific institutions to support reef conservation projects worldwide. (Submitted by The Nature Conservancy)



Ocean Action Panel 8:

Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level

Under this topic, 193 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

One of the most pressing challenges identified by stakeholders is the lack of comprehensive cooperation at the regional and subregional levels. Despite the shared environmental and marine issues, many countries struggle to align their policies and collaborate effectively across borders. The **absence of harmonized policies and robust data-sharing platforms** impedes progress, limiting the ability to address critical environmental challenges holistically. This fragmentation weakens conservation efforts, resulting in unsustainable resource use and delayed responses to emerging threats.

Another challenge is the **limited adoption of sustainable practices in marine and fishery management**. Toxic chemicals in fishing and unsustainable fishing practices continue to harm biodiversity and degrade marine ecosystems. While some stakeholders are promoting sustainable aquaculture and methods to reduce the environmental footprint of fishing activities, the lack of widespread adoption of these practices threatens the long-term health of marine environments. **Economic pressures and the absence of adequate support for local communities** further compound the issue, making it difficult for coastal populations to transition to sustainable livelihoods.

Lastly, stakeholders expressed concern that many regions face significant **technological gaps in ocean governance and conservation**. The failure to fully leverage modern technologies and innovative data solutions constrains conservation efforts, limiting decision makers' capacity to make informed decisions. Without adequate access to advanced tools and technologies, local communities and policymakers struggle to engage effectively in marine conservation efforts. This technological divide also inhibits the ability to monitor environmental changes, leading to slower responses to critical issues such as marine resource depletion and habitat degradation .

Transformative Actions

Multiple stakeholders highlighted the importance of policy and decision making related to enhancing cooperation at the regional and subregional level. They emphasized the importance of supporting decision-making through **policy evaluations and evidence-based approaches**. Furthermore, stakeholders stressed the significance of **collaborative governance**, particularly in managing marine and fishery resources. They advocated for **co-management frameworks** that foster cooperation between fishers, community stakeholders, and managers to ensure more sustainable and equitable resource management.

"Program and policy evaluations and supply of quality data are essential for informed decision-making and fostering cooperation at regional and subregional levels." (Sama Consulting Services Corp.)

Various respondents emphasized the urgency of adopting sustainable practices, such as **eliminating the use of toxic chemicals in fishing activities**. These measures are crucial to preserving biodiversity and protecting marine ecosystems from harmful environmental impacts. Many stakeholders highlighted the promotion of **sustainable aquaculture and fishing methods**. These methods aim to reduce the environmental footprint of fishing practices, improve food security, and enhance the economic resilience of coastal communities.

"Achieving sustainable fisheries is a complex endeavor, and it is evident that a single actor, such as a government, is unlikely to achieve this objective alone. What is needed instead is a collective effort by all those with a stake in achieving the objective of sustainable fisheries. Having the support of a broad range of actors and reconciling their often-diverging perspectives through deliberation increases the legitimacy of the outputs." (Fisheries Transparency Initiative)

Several stakeholders underscored the need for a **proactive approach to ocean governance**. This involves early interventions and forward-thinking strategies to address emerging challenges in marine conservation and sustainable resource use.

Numerous respondents emphasized the importance of **empowering local communities** by granting them **access to modern technologies and supporting sustainable livelihoods**. This empowerment is essential for enabling communities to engage in environmental conservation and benefit from sustainable economic opportunities.

"A potential transformative action is the creation of local networks of communities who know their lands and waters best and are positioned at the center of solutions. These local networks should be bottom-up and island led, where we really must listen to those who have been left out of decision making while their lands, waters, and resources have slipped away through no fault of their own." (Environmental Systems Research Institute)

A strong theme of fostering regional and subregional cooperation emerged, with organizations advocating for **multinational frameworks, harmonized policies, joint data sharing, and collaborative approaches** to tackling shared environmental and marine issues across borders.

"One transformative action is the creation of a Regional Ocean Governance Framework by regional bodies such as the Regional Seas Programmes under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This framework should facilitate cooperation among neighboring countries, harmonize policies for sustainable ocean use, and establish joint initiatives for marine conservation." (Babatunde Development and Empowerment Initiative)

Partnership Spotlight

The [International Association of Universities \(IAU\)](#) plays a key role in fostering partnerships for ocean conservation through educational and research initiatives. The IAU promotes collaboration among universities and research institutions worldwide to enhance knowledge sharing and capacity building for sustainable ocean management. By supporting interdisciplinary research, policy dialogues, and academic exchanges, the IAU encourages regional and subregional cooperation to address global marine challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable resource use. (Submitted by International Association of Universities)

A key priority for several stakeholders was **improving data sharing and leveraging cutting-edge technologies** to address environmental challenges. Enhanced access to data and technology can drive innovation in conservation efforts and lead to more informed decision-making processes.

“Establishing common protocols for data collection and sharing ensures consistency and comparability across regions. This standardization helps in creating comprehensive databases that support large-scale analyses and more informed decision-making.” (Objectif Sciences International)



Figure 14: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 8: “Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional level” according to stakeholders.
Source: UN DESA

Partnership Spotlight

The Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF) is a regional cooperation initiative among six Southeast Asian and Pacific countries aimed at sustainably managing marine and coastal resources in the Coral Triangle, a biodiversity hotspot. The initiative has strengthened regional cooperation, leading to the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), improved fisheries management, and significant enhancements in coral reef health and marine biodiversity. It engages local communities in conservation efforts, promoting sustainable practices and improving livelihoods. It is led by the six Coral Triangle countries, supported by international donors and NGOs, and fosters collaboration through regional partnerships, community involvement, and capacity-building efforts. (Submitted by the Millenium Child Support Group)

Ocean Action Panel 9:

Promoting the role of sustainable food from the ocean for poverty eradication and food security

Under this topic, 116 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

Stakeholders from various sectors highlighted multiple challenges in promoting sustainable food from the ocean to eradicate poverty and ensure food security. Key challenges highlighted included a **lack of investment in small-scale fisheries, an absence of partnerships along the seafood supply chain, and outdated fisheries agreements**, making it difficult to achieve equitable and sustainable fishing practices.

Many stakeholders raised concerns about **small-scale fishing communities**, especially those that are **not subsidized, facing competition and displacement** from large-scale industries. Small-scale fisheries struggle to access necessary resources, geographic markets and technology, which in turn limits their ability to contribute to food security and economic development.

Reduction fisheries is another major concern highlighted by respondents, as it is still being deployed and overexploited species are further being targeted in the pursuance of producing fish meal and fish oil.

Transformative Actions

One transformative action that was mentioned by stakeholders would be the **investment in and**

support for small-scale fisheries (SSF). Stakeholders highlighted several options for promoting SSF. **Greater protection for unsubsidized local fishing communities** needs to be ensured through investments and collaborative efforts by governments, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society advocacy. Stakeholders highlighted the **FAO Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines** as an effective way to contribute to sustainable food production from the world's ocean.

Stakeholders have also emphasized the importance of **creating safe and permanent exclusion areas for small-scale fisheries** to protect them from large-scale industries such as large-scale fishing, mass tourism and gas extraction, and to provide greater access and local control over waters and their resources. This must be done in **cooperation between states, local fisheries and the private sector**.

"States must securely protect the tenure and access rights of small-scale fishers through creating secure and permanent exclusion areas that promote local control, customary stewardship, and enforcement to keep industrial fisheries out. Small-scale fishers are major contributors to food security and poverty eradication in coastal regions." (WWF)

Moreover, the **implementation of policies that prioritize the sustainable management of small-scale fisheries** to enhance food security and poverty eradication is important to stakeholders. According to stakeholders, it is the task of governments to ensure that small-scale fisheries have access to resources, geographical markets, and technology.

Several stakeholders called for the promotion of the **Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI)**. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of this initiative in fostering **partnerships between major seafood retailers, processors and fishing communities to create and enforce global standards for sustainable seafood sourcing**, while improving traceability and supporting small-scale fisheries through capacity building and market access programmes.

“This initiative (GSSI) would promote sustainable fisheries management, enhance food security programs, support economic empowerment for small-scale fishers, and raise awareness about the nutritional benefits of seafood. By investing in research and innovation and implementing robust monitoring systems, this approach would effectively address food security and poverty issues, making it a crucial focus for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference.” (University of Cape Coast)

Many stakeholders urged the establishment of **sustainable aquaculture hubs and practices** as a key transformative action developed in partnership with governments, international organizations and local fishing communities, to focus on environmentally friendly farming practices. Stakeholders highlighted practices such as an **Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA)** and **Community-Based Fish Farming**. IMTA mimics natural ecosystems to improve productivity and reduce environmental impact by replacing mono-species aquaculture with multi-trophic seafood farms. Such hubs could provide a global framework for sustainable and equitable management of marine resources.

“Governments, international organizations, and the private sector should collaborate to promote and fund innovative, eco-friendly aquaculture technologies. By investing in sustainable practices, such as integrated multi-trophic aquaculture and community-based fish farming, this action can ensure increased food production, economic opportunities for coastal communities, and environmental conservation.” (Association Tizzigzoute pour l'environnement et développement)

The promotion of the **blue economy and blue foods** was highlighted by stakeholders as a needed transformative action.

Partnership Spotlight

The “Fish Forever” initiative illustrates effective new approaches to promoting sustainable food from the ocean for poverty eradication and food security. Led by Rare in partnership with the Coral Triangle Initiative, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and local stakeholders, Fish Forever focuses on empowering coastal communities through community-based marine management and co-management systems. The initiative collaborates with local communities, governments, and NGOs to build capacity, advocate for supportive policies, and share best practices, making it a valuable model for accelerating the implementation of SDG 14. (Submitted by the University of Cape Coast)

Blue foods need to be integrated into key food system policies and national strategies to promote sustainable ocean use and conservation of the oceans, balancing food production with ecosystem health and aligning with broader marine conservation objectives. **Coordinated efforts across governments, ministries, fisheries, environmental agencies, and financial institutions are needed to align policies, investments, and programmes** to ensure that sustainable blue foods are prioritized.

“A crucial transformative action is the integration of blue foods into the core of food system decision-making, necessitating coordinated efforts across multiple government ministries. Establishing an inter-ministerial task force, with representatives from agriculture, fisheries, health, environment, and finance ministries, would be essential to this effort. This task force would work to harmonize policies, investments, and programs, ensuring that sustainable blue foods are prioritized in national strategies for food security, poverty reduction, and climate resilience.” (Aquatic Blue Food Coalition)

Another transformative action identified by stakeholders is the need to **reform international fisheries agreements**. Several stakeholders highlighted the unequal distribution of power between fishing countries and fishing areas. Stronger agreements should ensure that an adequate share of the catch is reserved for local consumption and that small-scale fishermen have preferential access to marine resources.

“The countries that need these fishing resources need to ensure that international fishing agreements prioritize sustainable fishing practices, fair data principles and the rights of local communities. These agreements should ensure that an adequate portion of the catch is reserved for local consumption and that small-scale fishers have preferential access to marine resources. Additionally, these agreements should include data sharing and capacity-building to enable local fishers to manage their own fisheries and to adopt sustainable practices and improve their economic resilience.” (European Marine Board Secretariat)

Stakeholders also stressed the **need for fisheries agreements** to be **based on the most recent assessments** of current target stocks of marine wildlife, no more than 10 years old. **Transparency and public access to private fisheries agreements must be promoted at the international level** to ensure that agreements between states and shipowners are publicly available. Finally, stakeholders have highlighted the need for **mariculture**, in particular seaweed farming, as a transformative measure to ensure food security while being a promising tool for carbon neutrality, improving coastal water quality, and strengthening the blue economy.

“Without thoughtful safeguards and development, there is a substantial risk that rapid growth of this industry could cause damage to marine ecosystems while excluding indigenous and small-scale farmers. Therefore, governments should commit to ensuring that indigenous and coastal communities have equitable access to mariculture opportunities that benefit both people and nature, including by promoting sustainable, inclusive, and well-monitored seaweed farming practices and industries.” (Pew Charitable Trusts)



Credits: Magda Ehlers from Pexels



Figure 15: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 9: “Promoting the role of sustainable food from the ocean for poverty eradication and food security” according to stakeholders.
Source: UN DESA



Credits: World Oceans Day/Romeo Bodolai

Partnership Spotlight

In 1999, the Monterey Bay Aquarium launched the Seafood Watch Program, with the aim to promote sustainable seafood choices through consumer education and strategic partnerships with fisheries, retailers, and restaurants. This initiative involves creating accessible sustainable seafood guides, collaborating with businesses to adopt responsible sourcing policies, and engaging local fishing communities in sustainable practices. By offering workshops, sharing data, and advocating for sustainable policies, the Seafood Watch Program contributes to sustainable development goals related to ocean conservation, poverty eradication, and food security. (Submitted by World Muslim Congress; Human Rights and Forest Brain Africa)

Ocean Action Panel 10:

Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UNCLOS

Under this topic, 113 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

A key theme that emerged from stakeholders is the **gap between international agreements and their enforcement**. While frameworks like **UNCLOS** (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and **BBNJ** (United Nations Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) exist to govern the sustainable use of ocean resources, stakeholders emphasized the difficulty in translating these agreements into action. According to stakeholders, the challenge lies not only in signing treaties but in ensuring that they lead to measurable conservation outcomes.

“Turn into action rules like the BBNJ and the international agreements to make people even beyond the academia aware of the issues and how to face them.” (IUCN CEC/UNESCO Earth Network/Ocean Literacy)

Another prominent challenge is the **lack of capacity-building** to support the implementation of these international laws. Stakeholders frequent-

ly pointed out that many communities and governments, especially in developing regions, **lack the knowledge and resources to adhere to and enforce international maritime law, such as UNCLOS**.

“We need to enhance capacity building efforts within the UNCLOS framework, especially on matters relating to the BBNJ.” (HACOSTA)

A recurring theme is the need for **universal participation in treaties like UNCLOS**. Stakeholders noted that while many nations are party to these agreements, some remain outside their purview or do not fully implement their provisions. This lack of universal participation undermines the global effort to ensure sustainable ocean governance.

“Universal participation in the UNCLOS should be encouraged to make sure that no country is left behind in ocean governance.” (The Sasakawa Peace Foundation)

Another theme is the **conflict between national sovereignty and international obligations**.



Partnership Spotlight

The [Global Fishing Watch](#) is an innovative partnership that leverages satellite technology to monitor illegal fishing activities. By offering real-time data on fishing vessel movements, this partnership helps countries enforce international ocean governance frameworks, such as UNCLOS, and ensures better compliance with international regulations. Through the monitoring of illegal fishing, this initiative supports sustainable fishing practices and aids in protecting marine biodiversity on a global scale. (Submitted by Babatunde Development and Empowerment Initiative)



Figure 16: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 10: “Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UNCLOS” according to stakeholders.

Source: UN DESA

Some nations are hesitant to fully implement international frameworks due to concerns over losing control of their maritime resources. This creates a challenge for global coherence in managing ocean sustainability.

“Governments must take concrete action to follow up on the ITLOS (International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea) decision about the links between Ocean and climate. Polluting the ocean with GHG (greenhouse gases) is not allowed under UNCLOS - this must be followed by strict measures to limit GHG emissions.” (Women for Sea)

Transformative Actions

One of the transformative actions advocated by stakeholders is the **expansion of MPAs** and the **moratorium on deep-sea mining**, both of which align with the principles outlined in **UNCLOS** and **BBNJ**. Stakeholders see MPAs as critical tools for safeguarding biodiversity, particularly in international waters.

Another key action revolves around **strengthening the role of international legal mechanisms like ITLOS**. ITLOS has made several rulings on maritime disputes, but stakeholders believe its

authority could be expanded to play a more central role in enforcing compliance with international maritime law.

“Now that ITLOS, an international tribunal, has clarified the obligations of States on May 21, 2024 in a landmark opinion, States must take into consideration its conclusions and make sure that they implement UNCLOS according to the Tribunal’s conclusions.” (Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change)

Capacity-building remained a major focus, with stakeholders calling for increased **education and resources at the local and national levels** to ensure the successful implementation of **UNCLOS** and related agreements. This was seen as essential to bridging the knowledge gap and empowering local authorities to enforce international laws effectively.

Stakeholders also highlighted the need for **technology-driven solutions to improve monitoring and compliance**. Digital platforms were seen as essential for tracking illegal activities such as overfishing, pollution, and other violations, in line with international maritime laws.

Partnership Spotlight

The High Ambition Coalition for BBNJ is a global multi-stakeholder initiative that advocates for the swift adoption and implementation of the BBNJ agreement. This coalition brings together governments, NGOs, and international organizations, to protect marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. By ensuring that the principles of the BBNJ agreement are upheld, the partnership contributes to SDG 14, particularly the conservation of marine ecosystems and the equitable use of marine resources. (Submitted by Greenpeace International)



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