

# Ocean Action Panel 10:

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

*An extract of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation:  
Inputs to Ocean Action Panels Concept Papers*

## About this Paper

This paper is an extract from the report of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Inputs to Ocean Action Panels Concept Papers, which summarizes inputs received from stakeholders to a global online stakeholder consultation organized by UN DESA in connection with the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference which will be held from 9 June to 13 June in Nice, France.

The main Report can be found [here](#), including links to all responses and all inputs to the ten Ocean Action Panels, as well as detailed background information and a summary.

This paper presents summaries of key messages for 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.



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## 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)