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Ocean Action Panels

ADVANCE UNEDITED

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

Concept paper prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

The present concept paper was prepared pursuant to paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 78/128, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the 2025 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 to prepare concept papers on each of the themes of the Ocean Action Panels, taking into account the relevant ocean-related processes of the Assembly and other possible contributions. The present paper relates to Ocean Action Panel 1, entitled "Conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems including deep-sea ecosystems". In the paper, the status, trends, challenges and opportunities for the achievement of relevant targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14 are set out, under the overarching theme of the Conference: "Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean".

I. Introduction

i. Importance of marine and coastal ecosystems

1. Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems, including those in the deep-sea, are essential for planetary stability and human well-being. They support an enormous range of life forms, more than double the diversity found on land, as well as human wellbeing. Healthy oceans provide many essential benefits and services for people and the planet, including climate regulation, maintaining physical and chemical cycles of the planet, nutrition, food security, human well-being and a wide range of cultural and spiritual values.
2. The annual economic value provided by the ocean to the global economy is projected to reach USD 3 trillion by 2030, making it comparable to one of the top 10 economies worldwide. The production of aquatic foods in the ocean sustains millions of people, with food provision on average growing at about twice the growth rate of the human population since 1960. Globally, 492 million people, nearly half of them women, depends at least partly on small-scale fisheries.[1] Oceans also provide non-monetary benefits, including nutrition and social and cultural values.

ii. Challenges facing marine and coastal ecosystems

3. The health, functioning, and resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems are increasingly facing pressure from intensifying use of marine resources and destructive practices, combined with other human-induced pressures, leading to a triple-planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution, which undermines the long-term sustainability of these important ecosystems and the services they provide.
4. Moreover, the necessary investment to scale conservation efforts in line with growing human pressures is lacking. If unaddressed, these pressures will lead to further ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, impacting global food security and livelihoods, and undermine planetary functions and stability. A stronger and closely coordinated global response is therefore required to conserve, sustainably manage, and restore marine and coastal ecosystems.

iii. Developments at the international level towards sustainable ocean ecosystems

5. Since the second United Nations Ocean Conference, the health and resilience of ocean ecosystems have been further recognized globally. The 2024 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development emphasized the role of the ocean in progressing SDGs 1, 2, 13, and 17, highlighting the need for coordinated and accelerated global efforts to protect marine biodiversity and ensure the sustainable use of ocean resources (SDG 14).
6. In recognition of the need for scaled-up action, several international processes, frameworks and agreements have been developed with a focus on elevating political ambition and catalyzing actions in support of sustainable ocean ecosystems and biodiversity, such as the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution and the UNFCCC Ocean-Climate Dialogue, among others.
7. Despite significant efforts and advances, the global community is falling short of achieving most of the targets under SDG 14, including those relating to conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems.

[1] https://www.nature.com/articles/nature09689.

II. Status and Trends

i. Marine biodiversity and drivers of biodiversity loss

8. The ocean is one of the world's major reservoirs of biodiversity. The ocean hosts 32 of the 34 known phyla on earth and it is estimated that the ocean contains between 500,000 and 10 million marine species, many of which have yet to be identified, with over 2,000 new species recognized each year. Beyond microorganisms (bacteria and viruses) and marine invertebrates which comprise majority of marine life, approximately 18,000 bony and cartilaginous fish are described. Furthermore, the large degree of uncertainty in the number of marine species illustrates the high level of uncertainty in our knowledge of marine biodiversity. Marine animal species are insufficiently protected at the international level, partly due to their migratory nature and presence in areas beyond national jurisdiction and also because of persistent gaps in scientific knowledge and understanding of their ecological roles and conservation needs, even though they play an irreplaceable role in the functioning of the ecosystems on which life on earth depends. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) considers that 46,300 species are threatened with extinction worldwide, totalling 28% of species assessed, including 37% of sharks and rays.

9. Given the enormous diversity of marine life and the complexity of marine ecosystems and the ways in which human activities affect marine ecosystems, it is challenging to provide a simple overall description of the state of marine biodiversity. While progress is being made in certain places and species and habitat protection and recovery is being demonstrated in certain areas, there is an overall continuing trend of rapid biodiversity and habitat loss. Approximately half the live coral cover on coral reefs has been lost since the 1870s, and 44 percent of reef-building coral species globally are at risk of extinction. The IUCN Red List of Mangrove Ecosystems has found that half of the world's mangrove provinces are considered threatened. Almost 30 percent of global seagrass area has been lost since the late nineteenth century and at least 22 of the world's 72 seagrass species are in decline. 97 percent of CMS-listed migratory fish are at risk of extinction, and 6 out of the 13 great whale species are now classified as endangered or vulnerable.

10. In terms of fisheries, most of the 18,000 backboned marine fish species (and their numerous stocks) are not impacted by direct exploitation–greater than 85 percent of marine backboned fish species are not targeted by fisheries. However, the fraction of exploited fish stocks impacted by overfishing continues to increase, with 62.3 percent being fished within biologically sustainable levels in 2021, 2.3 percent lower than in 2019. Currently, global catch remains stable with 76.9 percent of these landings coming from biologically sustainable stocks in 2021. In these global figures are regional variations and localized fishing impacts which can be explored in FAO reporting. The fraction of overfished fish stocks continues to increase, and reported global catches stagnate despite increasing fishing effort.[2] In addition, reports under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) indicate that many marine migratory species listed in the CMS Appendices, including marine mammals and some species of sharks and rays, are acutely sensitive to pressure from exploitation due to their inherently low reproductive capacity (e.g. as bycatch).

11. Major threats to ocean biodiversity are due to anthropogenic climate change, with rising ocean temperatures, acidification, and sea level rise having recorded impacts on species and habitats alike. Other significant threats include unsustainable fishing practices, land/sea-use change, and land-based and marine pollution, including wastewater and agricultural runoff. Scientific

[2] https://www.science.org/doi/abs/10.1126/science.adr5487.

assessments are varied in the estimation of individual and synergistic pressures, suggesting that 59-97 percent of the ocean is experiencing increasing cumulative impacts from these human pressures.[3] Significant efforts have been made to better understand the various direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss. This has resulted in a good understanding of why marine ecosystems are being degraded across the world (with regional and local variations for certain species and habitats). Likewise, a wide range of tools have been developed and implemented to minimize pressures and reduce or eliminate their impacts on marine ecosystems.

12. Unfortunately, many of these drivers and pressures have either increased in recent years or have not yet been minimized to a level that is no longer harmful to ecosystem structure and function and long-term sustainability in some areas. Climate change, and its associated impacts, continues to worsen, with 2015 to 2024 being the ten warmest years on record, and ocean warming and global mean sea level reaching their highest levels on record in 2024. These impacts act synergistically with other pressures facing the ocean, with increasing overall cumulative impacts on many marine systems. According to the Planetary Boundary Framework updated in September 2023, 6 out of 9 critical processes which together maintain a stable and resilient Earth have been transgressed.[4]
13. Furthermore, the indirect drivers (also referred to as 'underlying causes') of biodiversity loss, such as demographic change, social and cultural dynamics, poverty and market trends, are especially difficult to address as part of efforts to achieve healthier ecosystems, especially as they operate almost always in concert and across multiple scales and varying levels of proximity from the location in question.[5]

ii. Global commitments and frameworks related to ocean biodiversity

14. The integration of biodiversity considerations into the multilateral policy framework for the ocean is progressing, with cooperation among international instruments increasing (e.g. between Regional Fishery Bodies and Regional Seas Conventions & Action Plans). Ecosystem-based management approaches are being promoted.
15. The Convention on Biological Biodiversity is one of the main international frameworks regarding the protection of biodiversity worldwide. Its first marine and coastal biodiversity program of work was adopted in 1998. In 2008, the ninth meeting of the CBD COP adopted scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSA). The EBSAs are special areas in the ocean that serve important purposes, in one way or another, to support the healthy functioning of oceans and the many services that it provides. One of the main outcome of CBD COP 16 was the agreement on a new process to identify EBSAs.
16. Adopted in 2022, the KMGBF sets ambitious global goals and targets for nature, including the conservation of 30 percent of marine and coastal areas by 2030. Essentially, the KMGBF requires a *whole-of-government* and *whole-of society* approach to deliver the many interlinked targets in an integrated way - from ecosystem conservation and restoration to sustainable consumption and production practices.
17. The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), adopted on 19 June 2023, aims to ensure the conservation and

[3] Halpern, B.S., Frazier, M., Afflerbach, J. et al. Recent pace of change in human impact on the world's ocean. Sci Rep 9, 11609 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-47201-9. David O. Obura et al. ,Integrate biodiversity targets from local to global levels.Science373,746-748 (2021).DOI:10.1126/science.abh2234.

[4] https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html.

[5] https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html.

sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. It addresses:

- Marine genetic resources, including the fair and equitable sharing of benefits.
- Measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas.
- Environmental impact assessments.
- Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

18. The BBNJ Agreement will enter into force 120 days after the date of deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession. With over a third of the ratifications required received as at the time of preparation of the present concept paper, the third United Nations Ocean Conference represents a unique opportunity to galvanize commitments for additional ratifications.
19. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2024, the Pact for the Future commits to accelerating efforts to restore, protect, conserve, and sustainably use the environment. This includes ambitious actions to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use, and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems, reflecting the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 14.
20. Regarding marine species, several conventions ensure their preservation. CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) aims at ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) aims to conserve migratory species throughout their ranges. The International Whaling Commission (IWC) regulates commercial whaling, namely through a moratorium prohibiting commercial whaling enacted in 1986. Several other conventions complete the multilateral framework for the protection of marine species: the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS), the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas…
21. These complement the wide range of existing global and regional multilateral instruments and bodies that deal with certain aspects of marine and coastal ecosystems, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing agreements; Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans [6]; Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Arrangements; conventions dealing with pollution from ships such as the MARPOL convention, the Ballast Water Management Convention and the London Convention/London Protocol; conventions dealing with certain pollutants, such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions; and work under the International Seabed Authority, in addition to many others.
22. Further, various processes and initiatives have emerged that are essential to the implementation of international commitments related to the ocean. For example, the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which produces the World Ocean Assessments, is the only global integrated assessment on the state of the marine environment. UN 'decade' initiatives are also crucial, in this regard. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development provides a

[6] 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAP) have introduced regulatory frameworks for the protection of biodiversity promoting the use of integrated approaches. Several RSCAP have adopted legally binding protocols to conserve marine and coastal biodiversity and ICZM providing concrete measures for conservation and sustainable management of marine and costal resources including commitments on MPA 30 by 30 target of the KMGBF.

platform to co-create and co-deliver the knowledge needed for decision-making and contributes to strengthening the science-policy-society interface. In addition, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration provides a major opportnity to elevate attention and actions on restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems.

iii. Translating commitments into action

23. We have seen an expansion of spatial conservation of around 1.77 million km^2 since 2020, bringing the global coverage of protected and conserved areas to 8.4% of marine and coastal areas. However, a further 78.3 million km^2 (21.6%) of marine and coastal areas needs to be secured in networks of protected and conserved areas by 2030 to reach the 30x30 target[7], and practical tools and adequate resourcing ensuring management effectiveness and enforcement must be considered. There have been noteworthy efforts to identify and create new other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) as a key contribution to the 30x30 target. One related example is the ongoing expansion of Marine spatial planning (MSP) initiatives. By the end of 2023, 126 countries/territories were engaged in MSP initiatives, with 45 having finalized plans.[8] However, only a small number of countries have yet to formally report OECMs in their marine and coastal areas to the World Database on OECMs, despite that use of related and possibly criteria compliant spatial management (e.g., LMMAs) could provide an example of successful OECMs.

24. With concerted conservation action we are witnessing recovery of vulnerable species and populations (e.g., many marine mammals and sea turtles), and we have the tools and approaches to reverse negative trends. For example, it's been shown that nature is generally declining less rapidly in areas managed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their role as ocean stewards should be recognized and supported.

25. Unfortunately, despite the diversity of nature's values, most policymaking approaches have prioritized a narrow set of values at the expense of both nature and society, as well as of future generations, and have often ignored values associated with Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' worldviews.[9]

III. Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

i. Rising pressures on ecosystems and biodiversity loss

26. Despite significant efforts to understand and mitigate the drivers of biodiversity loss, many pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems have increased or remain inadequately addressed, including pollution, coastal development, and resource overexploitation. Climate change continues to worsen. Ocean warming and rising sea levels exacerbate these pressures, leading to strong and intensifying cumulative impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems. Indirect

[7] UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2024). Protected Planet Report 2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN: Cambridge, United Kingdom; Gland, Switzerland.

[8] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000390054.

[9] IPBES (2022). Summary for Policymakers of the Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Pascual, U., Balvanera, P., Christie, M., Baptiste, B., González-Jiménez, D., Anderson, C.B., Athayde, S., Barton, D.N., Chaplin-Kramer, R., Jacobs, S., Kelemen, E., Kumar, R., Lazos, E., Martin, A., Mwampamba, T.H., Nakangu, B., O'Farrell, P., Raymond, C.M., Subramanian, S.M., Termansen, M., Van Noordwijk, M., and Vatn, A. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6522392.

drivers, such as demographic change, social dynamics, poverty, and market trends, further complicate efforts to achieve healthier ecosystems.

ii. Capacity limitations and discrepancies

27. Many countries and communities lack the expertise, infrastructure, and financial resources needed to implement sustainable management frameworks for marine ecosystems. The KMGBF set a target of closing a USD 700 billion annual biodiversity finance gap. While biodiversity-related official development finance has increased, a substantial financial gap remains. Addressing this gap is crucial to meeting KMGBF commitments. Furthermore, capacity needs are not merely limited to financial resources, but also include informational, technical, scientific, legal and institutional capacities as well.

iii. Governance challenges

28. Relevant laws, regulations and policies exist in nearly all countries, but the capacity for effective implementation is sometimes lacking. Fragmentation within government sectors hinders coherent implementation and policy development, even on interconnected issues like biodiversity and climate change. Inclusive and participatory governance systems are needed to empower Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as women and youth, in ocean governance and decision-making. Small-scale fisheries, employing more people than all other ocean sectors combined, should be engaged in governance and management.

Opportunities

i. Increasing awareness and engagement

29. Public and political interest in ocean and nature conservation is at a high. The adoption of SDG 14 and the convening of UN Ocean Conferences reflect growing political will. Biodiversity awareness has significantly increased, with citizens recognizing biodiversity loss as a critical global issue. Tracking of public awareness of biodiversity through the Biodiversity Barometer has shown that biodiversity awareness has significantly increased since the inception of such tracking efforts in 2009. Biodiversity loss is recognized by citizens as a critical global issue, ranking as the second most urgent global environmental concern following climate change.[10]
30. Various stakeholders have not only been devoting greater attention to ocean biodiversity, but also proactively seeking ways to be engaged in planning and management at various scales. The importance of robust stakeholder engagement is being increasingly recognized as an essential aspect of governance that substantially increases the effectiveness of management interventions. Furthermore, many stakeholders and rights-holders, in particular Indigenous Peoples and local communities, have a right to be centrally engaged in discussions regarding either the use of their knowledge or resources or decision-making that will affect their well-being and livelihoods. The Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines) constitute a framework for how to engage with fishing communities, based on a human-rights-based approach. The study Illuminating Hidden Harvests – the contribution of small-scale fisheries to sustainable development (*FAO, Duke University & WorldFish*) outlines pathways for increased sustainability. The importance of intergenerational equity is also driving increased engagement of youth in various policymaking processes.

[10] https://www.biodiversitybarometer.org/biodiversity-barometer-reports.

ii. Cross-sectoral dialogue, coordination, and collaboration

31. Integrated, interdisciplinary, multisectoral, and participatory approaches are essential for addressing ocean issues. Increasing levels of dialogue and collaboration across policy processes are evident. Mechanisms like UN-Oceans, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue, and Regional Seas Conventions & Action Plans facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation at the secretariat levels to consider environmental, social and economic drivers of ecosystem degradation.

32. In addition, various sectoral bodies, such as FAO, IMO and ISA, are lending greater attention to issues related to marine ecosystems. For example, FAO developed a Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Agricultural Sectors and created unit dedicated to mainstreaming biodiversity across its various areas of work. The Marine Environment Protection Committee of the IMO recently recognized the importance of the goals and targets of the KMGBF for its work on international shipping and is called for more attention to issues such as underwater noise. The Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiative of ISA devotes to describing over one thousand new species from the Area enabling scientists to create maps of life on the seafloor that will help understand and manage the possible effects of anthropogenic activities on deep-sea ecosystems. Various Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) have increasingly focused on conservation and protection of sensitive marine habitats, with some RFMOs advancing efforts to identify and report Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) as a contribution to achieving Target 3 (30x30) of the KMGBF.

iii. Strengthening the science-policy interface with new technologies

33. The UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development has catalyzed attention and support for expanding ocean knowledge and technologies, thereby complementing the Regular Process and its World Ocean Assessments. Since its debut in January 2021, the Ocean Decade, which is led by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO-IOC), has become the largest coordinated global ocean science initiative ever undertaken. Through a massive portfolio of Decade Actions including over 50 global ocean science programmes and 400 national and regional projects, the Ocean Decade has catalyzed synergies and collaboration among governments, NGOs, local communities and the private sector to transform the way that ocean science and knowledge are generated and used. The implementation of the BBNJ Agreement is expected to contribute to such efforts by promoting marine scientific research and by supporting science-based conservation and management measures.
34. ISA's years of efforts in promoting and encouraging marine scientific research in the Area have provided critical information on deep sea environments. ISA contractors' exploration related activities have provided a valuable and ever-growing foundation of understanding deep sea environments and ecosystems which are extremely challenging to study owing to their scale, conditions and in many cases due to their remote nature.
35. With advances in science and technology, there is also an increasing variety of technologies and tools available to support governance and management. For example, artificial intelligence (AI) is showing great promise and already being used for things such as tracking of endangered species, air and water quality monitoring, surveying different parts of the ocean and projecting scenarios.

iv. Recognition of diverse values of marine ecosystems

36. People relate to nature in multiple ways, reflecting different worldviews. However, as noted earlier in this paper, policymaking has often prioritized a certain set of values to the detriment of certain stakeholders, including indigenous Peoples and local communities as well as future generations. Efforts to recognize and respect diverse values are increasing, with new programmes and bodies focused, including, for example a new programme of work adopted and a new subsidiary body created by the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity specifically on indigenous Peoples and local communities. Recognizing and upholding the rights of various stakeholders can catalyze transformative change, including by strengthening the roles of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and youth as ocean stewards.

IV. Solutions and Best Practices

Adopting Ecosystem Management Approaches

37. The ecosystem approach provides a strong concept and many relevant tools to address both use and conservation objectives and promote sectoral integration. 'Ecosystem Approaches' have been negotiated and developed under the CBD, FAO, ISA, UNFCCC and UNEP Regional Seas, and these tools help guide the implementation of change at the ecosystem level. Such holistic approaches prioritize 'ecosystem function and resilience' recognizing the value of both sustainable use and conservation efforts and the need for cross-sectoral integration — essentially, enabling joined-up efforts for management and conservation to achieve objectives for people and nature.

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) including Blue Carbon

38. As defined at the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2 Resolution 5)[11], nature-based solutions (NbS) are "actions aimed at protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits". NbS contribute directly to the KMGBF by halting biodiversity loss, enhancing ecosystem connectivity, and integrating biodiversity into policy and planning. Marine and coastal NbS also contribute to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. For example, rooted vegetation in the coastal zone – such as tidal marshes, mangroves and

[11] https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39864/NATUREBASED%20SOLUTIONS%20FOR%20SUPPORTING%20SUSTAINABLE%20DEVELOPMENT.%20English.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

seagrasses – have high carbon burial rates on a per unit area basis and accumulate carbon in their soils and sediments, making it a key NbS to climate change mitigation.

39. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the International Partnership for Blue Carbon (IPBC) has worked towards achieving a vision of all global coastal blue carbon ecosystems to be protected, sustainably managed or restored, by promoting increased international commitments, improved national policies – including a better integration of national biodiversity and climate strategies – and accelerated on-the-ground action among its Partners.[12]

40. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are commitments made by countries under the Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Climate action plans are economy-wide, country-owned strategic plans for how countries aim to decarbonize and enhance their resilience to the impacts of climate change. Ocean-based climate actions within the framework of NDCs can include measures such as protection and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, development of renewable ocean energy sources and reduction of maritime greenhouse gas emissions. These actions not only contribute to global climate goals but also increase the resilience of marine ecosystems and coastal communities to climate impacts, having significant influence on the economic and social dimensions. Ocean-based solutions have a key role to play in leveraging synergies between climate and biodiversity agendas, weaving a "blue thread" between national biodiversity and climate strategies.[13]

Empowering Local Stakeholders in Planning and Management

41. Engaging and empowering local stakeholders in the planning and management of marine and coastal areas has proven to be an effective means to improve biodiversity outcomes and ensure long-term sustainability. Furthermore, besides leading on community-based management, Indigenous Peoples and local communities can contribute to country-wide policy planning and implementation. There are clear examples of this approach from around the world, including:

- **Senegal**: The fishermen of the Rural Community of Mangagoulack led the creation of an Indigenous and Community Conserved Area (ICCA) with support from the ICCA Consortium and the Global Environment Facility.[14]

- **Samoa**: The Vailoa Village Council and Women's Committee, supported by the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Environment Facility, developed a biodiversity baseline audit and a mangrove management plan, resulting in the establishment of a mangrove protected area that is now the third largest in Samoa, which has replenished fish, mud crab and shellfish populations and generated income for the local community.[15]

- **Australia**: The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) provides advice to the Australian Government on policy and implementation matters particularly related to Indigenous land and sea Country.[16]

- UNEP, through several GEF-funded International Waters initiatives including the CReW+ project continues its work with indigenous communities in Panama (the Guna

[12] https://bluecarbonpartnership.org/; https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2827enla Wooden, Krystal Crumpler and Julie Bélanger is available here: https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2827en.
[13] Lecerf, M., Millington-Drake, M., and Picourt, L., (2024), Blue Thread: Aligning National Climate and Biodiversity Strategies, p1-13. Ocean & Climate Platform, Blue Marine Foundation.
[14] https://www.iccaconsortium.org/index.php/2014/12/15/ an-icca-in-casamance-the-story-of-kawawana/.
[15] https://www.cbd.int/doc/nr/nr-06/ ws-nr-06-en.pdf.
[16] https://www.cbd.int/doc/nr/nr-06/ au-nr-06-en.pdf.

Yala Community), Mexico (the Mayan peoples), Honduras (the Miskito community) and Costa Rica among others.

42. Empowering stakeholders is highlighted in newly adopted legal and political documents. For example, the BBNJ Agreement supports more inclusive efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including by promoting participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, gender responsiveness of capacity-building and gender balance and equitable geographic representation in the composition of the bodies established under the Agreement.

Accelerating implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP)

43. Following the adoption of the KMGBF in 2022, a global effort has emerged to provide support to countries in updating, revising, implementing and monitoring their NBSAPs. The NBSAP Accelerator Partnership is a country-led initiative aimed at supporting the implementation of ambitious NBSAPs to collectively achieve the goals and targets of the KMGBF and live in harmony with Nature. The overarching purpose of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership is to ensure coherent support for the revision and implementation of NBSAPs and to promote increasing ambition over time through an enhanced process of country-specific support, coordination, collaboration and shared learning. It will promote the following mutually reinforcing and interrelated goals: Support NBSAP implementation; strengthen technical and institutional capacity; facilitate access to biodiversity finance; align financial flows for biodiversity mainstreaming; foster peer-to-peer learning and international collaboration; and elevate NBSAPs in national development planning.

Enhancing and upscaling ecosystem restoration globally

44. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 aims to enable the effective protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals of enhancing people's livelihoods, counteracting climate change and halting the collapse of biodiversity. Led by UNEP and FAO, and in collaboration with hundreds of partners, the Restoration Decade is building a strong, broad-based global movement to accelerate restoration globally. This includes building political momentum for restoration as well as thousands of initiatives on the ground. Through communications, events and a dedicated web platform, the UN Decade provides a hub for everyone interested in restoration to find projects, partners, funding and the knowledge they need to make their restoration efforts a success.

Improving Public Awareness and Appreciation for Nature and Biodiversity

45. Rising public awareness and appreciation for nature drive individual action and behavioral change and pressure on governments to act. Tailored approaches that align with the unique socio-cultural dynamics of different countries and communities using platforms and modes of communication catered for the target audience are essential. One interesting example comes from Belize where a radio drama series and call-in show on marine protected areas and sustainable fishing, supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society and PCI Media Impact, led to increased knowledge and sustainable fishing behavior among listeners.[17]

Supporting Biodiversity Mainstreaming into Sectoral Policies and Economic Development

[17] https://chm.cbd.int/database/ record/7E3D234F-E8AD-520C-C92B-490CE2806718.

46. Integrating biodiversity considerations into sectoral regulatory processes and development planning supports sustainable economic growth. One interesting approach is the capitals approach that aims to enable organizations to understand how their success is directly - or indirectly - underpinned by natural capital (renewable and non-renewable natural resources yielding a flow of benefits to people), social capital (networks and shared norms, values and understanding that facilitate cooperation within and among groups) and human capital (knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes of individuals contributing to improved performance and wellbeing). [18]
47. There are a wide range of approaches for biodiversity mainstreaming at different scales. Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into individual sectors can yield fruitful outcomes, as shown in South Africa when specific regulations for the deep sea demersal trawl sector helped to reduce seabird bycatch in its trawl fishery by 90 per cent by 2014, and the number of albatross deaths had fallen by 99 percent.[19] Also, biodiversity can be mainstreamed into national development planning, with an interesting example coming from Mozambique, where the national goal of protecting 30% of terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030 was integrated into the National Territorial Development Plan for 2020-2040, which aims for a "prosperous, competitive, sustainable, and inclusive Mozambique".[20]
48. Area-based management tools are being utilized by specialized organizations in guiding the regulation of use of the ocean to support the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems. Member States of the IMO have identified 19 Special Sensitive Areas based on ecological, socio-economic and/or scientific justification, requiring that appropriate regulations be put in place to reduce damage to those areas by international maritime activities. Around 20 Special Areas have been established under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), requiring a higher level of protection. ISA has established and implemented the environmental management plan for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in which a network of 13 areas of particular environmental interest have been identified that are entirely protected from deep-seabed mining. Spatial and temporal closures of areas to fishing have been implemented at sub-national, national and regional scales by appropriate bodies.

Enhancing effectiveness of Area-Based Conservation Measures Including MPAs

49. Effective implementation, ecologically representativeness, connectivity and equity are essential factors to ensuring that protected areas can deliver the biodiversity outcomes they seek. To improve effective implementation of MPAs, **a** new online marine protected area (MPA) tool hub and learning platform, MPAth[21], has been launched by UNEP, TNC, WWF and partners to support effective and equitable MPA development and implementation. At its core, the MPAth provides an innovative, easily accessible MPA 'problem-solving' and 'learning journey' platform with insightful guidance, decision-support tools and practical knowledge.
50. Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAP) have a significant role in supporting the designation and effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by enhancing exchange of best practices, knowledge sharing and provision of access to priority resources, including incorporating work on ICZM frameworks, Marine Spatial Planning tools and

[18] https://capitalscoalition.org/capitals-approach/.
[19] http://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/africa-leading-way-ending-seabird-bycatch.
[20] https://panorama.solutions/en/solution/integrating-mangroves-and-nature-based-solutions-nbs-blue-economy-strategies-sustainable.
[21] https://mpath.unep.org/.

application of coastal adaptation strategies. RSCAPs provide a pathway that allow marine users to aggregate and share their key goals and objectives. For example:

a. Contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention created a network of about 1,233 MPAs and other area-based conservation measures in the Mediterranean, inclusive of 39 Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI's), and the numbers are likely to increase.
b. Seychelles, that is a party to the Nairobi Convention, has made tremendous strides in increasing its extent of MPAs coverage. At present, its 16 MPAs protect about 26.4 % of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This is a good indicator that the island country's MPAs have gone beyond its pledge to achieve SDG 14 and its associated target 5. The enhancement of Seychelles MPAs has greatly increased the resilience of its fisheries and tourism sectors.
c. The 9 participating countries of the Coordinating Bodies of the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) have formally endorsed the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Framework (MCE) in April 2023 in addressing the GBF targets collectively, focusing on MSP, MPAs, and Habitats. They are also in the process of establishing a regional MPA network (social) bringing together key actors: ACB, PEMSEA, IUCN, CTN. UNESCAP, etc. which will be discussed at the OOC10 in Busan, South Korea in April, 2025.
d. The Nairobi Convention has an MPA Outlook for its region and its associated dashboard, that tracks contracting parties progress towards the now lapsed SDG14.5 target (10/20), and also serves as a baseline for the 30x30 target under the GBF. A critical Habitats Outlook, which is a sister to the MPA Outlook has just been completed and will help contracting parties not only identify potential areas to be put under different protection regimes under the 30x30 target, but also strengthen protected area management. The Convention has several COP Decisions on strengthening MPA management and application of other ABMTs for biodiversity conservation, with some now including reference to ratification of the BBNJ Agreement extending work under that Convention to areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). With its partners in the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, it has established a Western Indian Ocean MPA Network bringing together all PA managers in the region for shared learning.
e. Ongoing efforts across RSCAPs with regards to ICZM and marine spatial planning to promote blue economy in the context of sustainable development.

Effectively Implementing Relevant Legal Frameworks

51. Action must be grounded in UNCLOS, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, as annually recognized by the UN General Assembly. The universal participation and effective implementation of the Convention and its implementing Agreements, including the BBNJ Agreement, are crucial to ensure effective governance for the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of marine ecosystems, including deep-sea ecosystems. Accordingly, there is also need for effective national legal frameworks enabling inclusive and equitable ocean governance in synergy with international legal frameworks.

Technology for Management

52. Advances in technology provide a promising resource for improving the state of marine ecosystems. However, they should be carefully considered in terms of unintended negative by-products. In 2020, IUCN and the Huawei TECH4ALL programme, launched Tech4Nature, an open partnership to apply and promote digital solutions for fair and effective protected areas.

This partnership applies a unique 'benchmarking tool' that uses digital technology to track progress and improvements in protected areas. [22]

Achieving sustainability in use through managing impacts on marine environment

53. The management of use of marine resources can only be sustained through the realization of sustainable use objectives. Initiatives become more prevalent aimed at achieving sustainable development through managing impacts on marine environment. For example, FAO's Blue Transformation Roadmap 2022-2030 and Coastal Fisheries Initiative are frameworks for achieving long-term sustainability in fisheries and aquaculture sectors while combatting IUU fishing and promoting effective implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. In managing exploration activities in the Area, ISA employs a series of environmental protection tools to ensure effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects which may arise from activities in the Area, including through developing and applying such tools as environmental impact assessment, environmental baselines and monitoring, Environmental Management Plans and emergency orders.[23]

Ensuring Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from Marine Resources

54. Ensuring fair and equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits derived from certain marine resources is an integral part of related regimes. This is essential to not only ensuring an equitable and just approach to the use of certain marine resources, but also to ensuring that the right stakeholders and rightsholders retain ownership and stewardship over the resources that they are in the best position to manage.
55. A significant amount of experience has been built up under the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the CBD. The Protocol provides a framework for accessing genetic resources and sharing the benefits arising from their use. At CBD COP 16, a new multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from the use of DSI, including a global fund, was established. To fulfil the principle of common heritage of mankind, ISA' Finance Committee is working on the equitable distribution formulae and a Common Heritage Fund for the equitable sharing of financial benefits derived from activities in the Area.[24]
56. There are also emerging frameworks to facilitate access and benefit sharing relating to resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction. For example, the BBNJ Agreement addresses the uneven capacity to carry out and benefit from activities with respect to marine genetic resources and related digital sequence information, ensuring that such activities are in the interests of all States and for the benefit of all humanity.

Holistic National Planning for Implementation of Biodiversity, Climate, and Sustainable Development

57. To develop a sustainable blue economy, States ought to integrate considerations of biodiversity, climate, economic development, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and the interests of other stakeholders such as women and youth. Efforts in this regard include:

- **UNEP Sustainable Blue Economy Initiative**[25]: Helps countries apply a whole-of-government perspective in sustainable blue economy policy and integrated management. UNEP has developed a novel framework that enables countries develop and implement tangible transition pathways to sustainable, resilient and equitable blue

[22] https://tech4nature.iucngreenlist.org/.
[23] https://www.isa.org.jm/the-mining-code/.
24https://www.isa.org.jm/equitable-sharing-of-benefits/.
[25] https://www.unep.org/topics/ocean-seas-and-coasts/ecosystem-based-approaches/sustainable-blue-economy.

economies (SBE), tailored their unique settings and needs. A stepwise SBE Transition Framework supports holistic approaches that protect and regenerate ocean ecosystems while facilitating sustainable use of marine and coastal resources for human wellbeing. An accompanying Rapid Readiness Assess (RRA) tool helps countries put in place the enabling conditions to implement nature-based solutions and conservation and restoration actions for coastal resilience and sustainability. This regenerative approach recognizes society's dependence on healthy aquatic and marine ecosystems and natural resources and the complex interactions between human activity and the ocean. The RRA method has been applied in different contexts in countries such as Vietnam, Antigua and Barbuda[26], Trinidad and Tobago[27] and Kenya.!

- **UNESCO-IOC Marine Spatial Planning Global Programme (MSPglobal)**: Developed a Rapid Assessment Methodology (RAM) to support countries to advance their MSP process through enhanced coordination and cooperation among authorities as well as international and regional organizations willing to support. The 3-step methodology identifies MSP-related activities and tasks that have already been undertaken by a country, understand existing gaps, and then co-develop an action plan envisioned to guide resourcing and capacity development, working as an entry point for other initiatives. Since 2024, the RAM has been implemented in Benin, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Ghana, Thailand and Togo, while UNESCO-IOC is preparing to implement it in more countries in the coming months and years. [28]

Promoting Capacity Development and Transfer of Technology

58. Capacity development is crucial for sustainable ocean governance and the effective conservation of marine ecosystems and sustainable use of marine resources. Some examples include:

- **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)**: The Capacity Development Strategy (2023–2030) aims to enable all Member States to participate in and benefit from ocean research and services.

- **Ocean Decade Capacity Development Facility**: Launched in December 2023 to address capacity development needs of partners in SIDS, LDCs, and ECOPs.

- **UN-Portugal Ocean Fellowship**: Supports developing countries, particularly SIDS, in sustainable ocean governance and blue economy.

- **ISA:** ISA Contractors' Training Programme ensures personnel from developing States gain operational expertise to participate in activities in the Area and protect the marine environment. Regional and national training and research centres are established in China and Egypt in fostering expertise, facilitating research, and promoting responsible marine resource management. Dedicated actions were implemented to support and enhance the participation of women in deep sea research activities.

- **Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations:** Provides information, advice, and technical assistance to

[26] https://thecommonwealth.org/publications/rapid-readiness-assessment-transition-sustainable-blue-economy-pilot-project-antigua.
[27] https://thecommonwealth.org/publications/rapid-readiness-assessment-transition-sustainable-blue-economy-pilot-project-trinidad.
[28] https://www.mspglobal2030.org/rapid-assessment-methodology/.

support the implementation of the UNCLOS and its implementing agreements, including in exercising secretariat functions in relation to the BBNJ Agreement until the permanent secretariat established under it commences its functions.

- **UNEP and Regional Seas Programmes:** Provides policy advice, technical guidance, tools and capacity building to support effective nature-based solutions and other instruments to deliver global biodiversity, climate and pollution goals under GBF, UNFCCC and other MEAs, including Regional Seas Conventions & Action Plans.

59. The BBNJ Agreement will also likely contribute to addressing the uneven capacity in undertaking activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction, with expected spill-over effects on the capacity to implement other instruments, and will assist States in strengthening cooperation and coordination with regard to such activities through capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

Sustainable Financing for Conserving, Sustainably Managing and Restoring of Marine and Coastal Ecosystems

60. Ocean finance needs have only grown with increasing pressures, partly driven by subsidies that harm the ocean, and the desire to achieve ambitious ocean-related development and conservation goals. While investments have increased across both the public and private sectors (Berger et al., 2019), these gains are already being significantly outpaced by the growth in ocean finance needs, widening the finance gap. The ocean finance gap has become a clear obstacle to meeting global ocean goals and achieving ocean sustainability. Sustainable financing models, including blended finance vehicles, are critical for conserving, sustainably managing and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems.
61. A good example of a blended financing model for the ocean is the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR), the first UN Multi Partner Trust Fund dedicated solely to SDG 14. The GFCR coalition strengthens the resilience of coastal reef ecosystems, communities, and economies by mobilising new public and private resources that advance sustainable businesses and innovative financial solutions to the coral reef crisis. GFCR's locally driven implementation and investments follow an integrated ecosystem-based approach focused on "coral refugia," coral reef habitats that demonstrate resilience to climate change impacts. It is active in over 20 coral reef countries globally.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

62. Marine and coastal ecosystems, including deep-sea environments, form the foundation of planetary health, biodiversity, and human livelihoods. These ecosystems offer a wide range of ecosystem services, from supporting biodiversity and regulating climate to providing food security and generating economic prosperity as well as social and cultural values. However, since UNOC2 (2022), the general trend of ecosystem degradation due to human-induced pressures has not been reversed. This situation poses a significant threat to achieving global sustainable development goals.
63. Considerable efforts in all aspects have been made to understand, conserve, sustainably manage and restore marine and coastal ecosystems. The marine and coastal area under protection and conservation has been gradually increased. Through Marine Spatial Planning and application of other area-based management tools, States have gradually and substantially integrated biodiversity and climate action considerations into development policy and management. Global initiatives such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science, the UN Decade on Ecosystem restoration, UNEP Sustainable Blue Economy Initiative, UNESCO-IOC MSP global

Programme and related others have not only raised public awareness but catalyzed efforts and mobilized resources to close knowledge gaps, promote capacity building and advance science-based policymaking. Internationally negotiated frameworks and agreements such as KMGBF and the BBNJ Agreement have laid the groundwork for transformative change in marine and coastal ecosystems governance.

64. Despite the progress made, challenges persist. Pressures on ecosystems and drivers of biodiversity loss continue to rise. Climate change, pollution, and overexploitation continue to intensify and exacerbate the decline of marine ecosystems. Ocean warming, acidification, and sea-level rise amplify these threats, creating cascading effects on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, such as demographic change, social and cultural dynamics and market trends, add more complexity to the whole picture, with trade-offs that need to be recognized and addressed. Many countries lack the financial, technical, and institutional capacity to implement effective conservation and sustainable use measures. Policies, regulations and frameworks often operate in silos, limiting their effectiveness. While public awareness of ocean conservation has increased, more efforts are needed to translate this awareness into actionable change and sustained political will.
65. Amidst these challenges, significant opportunities exist to catalyze transformative actions. Public awareness of biodiversity and nature has significantly increased, which catalyzes concrete global, regional, subregional, national and local actions. Robust stakeholder engagement is being increasingly recognized and integrated in different levels of governance. Evolving international legal and policy frameworks are filling gaps facing marine and coastal ecosystems conservation, management and restoration. Dialogues, coordination and collaboration at the secretariat level across different policy processes have been steadily improving. Mechanisms like UN-Oceans, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative and the Sustainable Blue Economy Initiative promote cross-sectoral collaboration, fostering synergies between biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development agendas. Strengthening the science-policy interface is well recognized as critical for evidence-based decision-making. Advances in science and technology offer new tools for monitoring, managing, and restoring marine ecosystems. Diverse values of ocean ecosystems for diverse stakeholders have been gradually recognized, which presents positive indications in achieving sustainable outcomes.
66. To secure a sustainable future for marine and coastal ecosystems, **States may wish to consider the following actions:**

- **Support effective implementation of existing legal frameworks and promotion of milestone policy initiatives:** Fully and effectively implement UNCLOS, its implementing agreements, as well as other relevant global, regional and sub-regional instruments. Facilitate and prepare for the early entry into force and effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. Promote and encourage countries to implement the KMGBF and NDCs under the Paris Agreement,
- **Strengthen holistic approach:** Encourage States to adopt unified ocean policies that address biodiversity, climate, and development, ensuring equitable participation. Apply an ecosystem approach, the precautionary approach, nature-based solutions, ocean-based climate actions, innovative technologies and sustainable development goals to achieve maximum integrated effects and sustainability.
- **Sustainably manage 100 percent of the ocean under national jurisdiction**: By 2030, ensure that 100 percent of ocean areas under national jurisdiction are sustainably managed, strengthening national and regional efforts across all coastal and ocean states.
- **Build capacity:** Strengthen international efforts including coordination and collaboration among competent international organizations, States, private entities, research institutions and

financial institutions to address capacity gaps through targeted training, technology transfer, and financial support for developing States, taking into consideration the practical needs and long-term development goals of specific countries.

- **Mobilize financial resources:** Bridge the biodiversity finance gap through innovative mechanisms like blue bonds and blue loans, carbon credits, and public-private partnerships.
- **Promote equity and inclusivity:** Encourage broad stakeholders and rights-holders' engagement. Recognize and support the roles of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and youth in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Ensure equitable benefit-sharing and integrate diverse cultural perspectives into policymaking.
- **Leverage technology and innovation:** Expand the use of advanced technologies for monitoring, research, enforcement, and restoration. Foster partnerships to accelerate innovation.
- **Improve public awareness and education:** Launch global campaigns to raise awareness of marine and coastal ecosystems and the interconnectedness of ocean health and human well-being. Strengthen ocean literacy initiatives to inspire behavioral changes and drive political actions.

- **Enhance Area-Based Conservation Measures**: Focus on the quality and effectiveness of MPAs and other conservation measures. Prioritize connectivity, representativeness, and management effectiveness.

- **Realize sustainable use:** Ensure the sustainable use of marine resources while strengthening ecosystem conservation. Investing into sustainable use is integral to achieving ecosystem maintenance and restoration.

67. The degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems is a crisis that transcends national borders and affects all aspects of human and planetary well-being. By fostering global collaboration, leveraging scientific advancements, and promoting equity and inclusivity, we can chart a path toward the conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of our oceans. Achieving this vision requires urgent action from all stakeholders—governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, financial institutions, local communities, private sectors, and individuals alike. The future of marine ecosystems depends on our collective ability to act decisively and inclusively.

VI. Guiding Questions

1. What are the most pressing challenges and barriers preventing effective conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, including deep-sea ecosystems?

2. Do practical examples exist on holistic and integrated policy and management approaches that protects ocean and coastal health while enabling sustainable use of ocean resources for human wellbeing?

3. What innovative financing mechanisms can be introduced or expanded to support large-scale ecosystem restoration and conservation efforts and nature-based climate solutions?

4. What gaps exist in marine and coastal policy frameworks, and how can these gaps be addressed to align actions across sectors and regions?

5. How to foster integration of international goals such as those of SDG14, the KMGBF, Paris Agreement and Regional Seas Conventions & Action Plans into Marine Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management?

6. How to build upon and expand the experience of Marine Spatial Planning under national jurisdiction to the implementation of measures such as area-based management tools under the BBNJ Agreement?

7. How can Indigenous Peoples and local communities be protected and their roles as ocean stewards be promoted?

8. How can the Ocean Decade better enhance its role as a catalyst to accelerate global and regional action and mobilize diverse stakeholders for the conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems?

9. How can the multilateral ocean governance, including regarding marine species, can be strengthened in order to ensure the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity?