

RE: Stakeholder Statement at the UNOC3 Conference – PLENARY SESSION

Presenter: Vahid Fotuhi, Founder & CEO (same name as per UNOC credentials)

Organization: Blue Forest (same name as per UNOC credentials)

Title: Reviving Oceans Through Indigenous Collaboration: The MozBlue Model

Length: 290 words (2 minutes)

Launched 3 years ago during UNOC2 in Lisbon, MozBlue was conceived as a bold initiative to align with and accelerate progress towards SDG 14 by leveraging indigenous knowledge. Since its inception, the project has mobilized a partnership model rooted in community-led stewardship and large-scale coastal restoration.

A cornerstone of MozBlue's strategy has been the close collaboration with 30 indigenous coastal communities along Mozambique's Zambezi River Delta. These communities, which will grow to 300 by UNOC4, possess generations of ecological knowledge. They have been instrumental in designing and implementing restoration techniques that respect local biodiversity while strengthening ecosystem resilience.

Together, we have successfully revived over 1,500 hectares of degraded coastline, transforming once-eroded and lifeless shorelines into thriving mangrove ecosystems. This recovery not only restores critical habitats for marine life—including juvenile fish, crabs, and mollusks—but also enhances coastal protection against storm surges and sea level rise.

Today, I'm proud to announce that we have just completed the planting of our **10 millionth** mangrove tree. These mangroves play a crucial role in carbon sequestration, fisheries regeneration, and water quality improvement. The scale of this restoration effort makes MozBlue one of the largest community-led blue carbon initiatives in the region. By 2030, our target is to plant 240 million mangrove and restore 30,000 Ha of degraded coastline. And we're right on track to achieve that target!

Beyond environmental outcomes, MozBlue has also provided livelihoods through green jobs in seedling cultivation, monitoring, and eco-tourism, contributing to SDG 14's targets on sustainable use of marine resources and equitable economic benefit-sharing.

As we move forward, MozBlue remains a model for participatory ocean action, proving that indigenous knowledge, when paired with scientific insight and international commitment, can deliver transformative impact for ocean health and coastal communities.