

Canada's intervention for Ocean Action Panel 4

Thank you Mr. Moderator. And thank you to the co-chairs and distinguished panelists for your insightful interventions. With the longest coastline in the world, Canada takes the protection of our marine environment very seriously, as our oceans play a key role in our economy, culture, identity, health and well-being, especially among Indigenous and coastal communities.

We know that plastic pollution is one of the most urgent and visible threats to ocean health. It chokes marine ecosystems, endangers wildlife, and threatens the livelihoods of coastal communities. It is for this reason that Canada has been fully invested in the intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution, and were honoured to host the 4th session of this Negotiating Committee in Ottawa last year. We look forward to working with all of you to land the global agreement on plastic pollution later this year in Geneva.

But when we talk about marine pollution we cannot only focus on plastics. One issue that is of particular importance to Canada, and is highlighted as an emerging issue in the preparatory material for this panel, is the impact of underwater noise, in particular from shipping, on the marine environment.

Underwater noise impacts 130 marine species globally, affecting how they communicate, how they navigate and how they find food.

In Canada, the endangered Southern Resident killer whale has inspired us. With only 73 individuals remaining, Canada's commitment to see this population recover has helped us shape our commitment to action.

But we cannot solve this issue through strong domestic action alone. Shipping is a truly global industry that requires global solutions.

This is why, since 2017, Canada has been pushing for change on the international stage, contributing to foundational work on underwater noise from ships at the International Maritime Organization. And today, we elevated that ambition.

This morning, led by Canada and Panama, a High Ambition Coalition for Quiet Oceans was launched, with 37 countries representing more than 50% of the flagged vessels signing on to a declaration that promotes ambitious and practical solutions to achieving a quieter ocean. This includes:

- 1. The development of new policy at the IMO to drive the design and operation of quieter ships**
- 2. Establishing marine protected areas that take into account the protection and restoration of the natural ocean soundscape.**
- 3. Investigating and implementing effective technical and operational solutions to reduce vessel impacts on sensitive ocean wildlife**

And

- 4. Supporting capacity-building to assess and reduce ocean noise by sharing available tools and knowledge, such as those currently being developed by the IMO's GloNoise Partnership, an initiative that Canada is proud to be a Strategic Partner of.**

Addressing underwater noise from ships requires coordinated efforts and this High Ambition Coalition is a testament to the global commitment to take action.

To raise awareness.

To share best practices.

And to work together to find solutions.

We believe the global shipping fleet is at an opportune time to address this issue. With the recent adoption of the IMO Greenhouse gas measures to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, the entire fleet is being re-designed. This presents a golden opportunity to not only make ships cleaner and more efficient, but also quieter.

We look forward to working with all members of this High Ambition Coalition to achieve this change. And we hope we can count on more countries to join this initiative.

Thank you.