

Canada's intervention for Ocean Action Panel 7: Leveraging ocean, climate and biodiversity interlinkages

Thank you Moderator. And thank you to the distinguished panelists for their insightful interventions.

Canada recognizes the significant linkages between our work to protect marine biodiversity and combat climate change, and, perhaps more importantly, we recognize that in many cases the solutions to address impacts on biodiversity can also contribute to efforts to reduce emissions related to climate change. But too often discussions within international organizations that seek to address impacts on our oceans, climate change and biodiversity tend to be approached in silos. Processes like the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change highlight the importance of engaging ocean experts. Canada was privileged to serve as the co-facilitator of this dialogue in 2023 and 2024, during which time we covered key topics such as the impact of climate change on fisheries and food security, the link between marine biodiversity conservation and coastal resilience, and the technology needs for ocean climate action.

But an important example where some of these linkages need to be more actively leveraged is in the shipping sector, the largest user of the oceans.

As has been discussed over the last few days, shipping contributes to the spread of aquatic invasive species through biofouling, emits greenhouse gases into the atmosphere contributing to climate change and air pollution, and emits noise and wastewater into the ocean, impacting the health of marine species and overall degradation of the marine environment. While there are distinct efforts to address all of these issues already underway at the IMO, it becomes a question of prioritization for both advancing the work and implementing solutions, and how discussions at the IMO, UNFCCC, CBD, FAO and other international fora link together. Canada has been actively leading efforts to encourage consideration of the co-benefits that exist between, for example, underwater noise from ships and energy efficiency, recognizing that looking at this more holistically will not only address two priority issues, but also be economically efficient in terms of investment in technology.

We want to use our time today to highlight the golden opportunity facing Member States and the shipping sector over the next decade. The IMO GHG strategy requires the maritime sector to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. This means that over the next decade or so we will be looking to replace or redesign the entire global fleet. While requirements on underwater noise management and biofouling are not currently mandatory at the IMO, the impacts on the marine environment are very well known. Further, the IMO has recently accepted a proposal, co-sponsored by Canada, to introduce a new mandatory instrument on biofouling, which will mean

that eventually certain measures will be required for ship design or operations. We therefore need to be approaching the redesign of vessels in a more holistic manner. Canada has been undertaking research into technologies to inform decisions on how to capitalize on these co-benefits, but our research has also enabled us to identify actions that result in a trade-off between two priority issues that can ensure design or retrofit decisions are not solving one problem while exacerbating another.

In short, we all want to ensure that the significant investments that are going to be made over the next decade lead to the greatest outcomes possible. And to this end, Canada believes that significant benefits can be had from tackling biofouling, underwater noise and climate issues together in the shipping sector and invites other nations to join us in finding innovative solutions to these shared challenges that are better for the climate, marine biodiversity and overall ocean health.

Thank you.