

THE BLUE QUEST

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

“We cannot fail. We cannot lose these things on our watch”. These are the words of Angelique Morato-Songco- Mama Ranger- superintendent of Tubbataha Reef Natural Park and world heritage site, talking about the vital marine biodiversity of the area.

I’m speaking here on behalf of The Blue Quest, Tubbataha, Sulubaaï Environmental Foundation, Marine Conservation Institute, and all the outstanding MPAs of the Blue Parks and Blue Sparks network.

We call for greater ambition to reach an effective 30x30 target that includes a predominance of fully or highly marine protected areas. MPAs that achieve this provide a globally meaningful level of conservation that will rebuild biodiversity and sustain humankind.

Even if local contexts are different, there are similar scenarios all over the world where communities are under threat, losing vital ecosystem services provided by the Ocean. We have today an incredible combination of scientific and traditional knowledge that suggest Marine Protected Areas can be our most effective tool. We know how powerful they can be, but only when science-based standards and management, in collaboration with local stakeholders, create real protection. This is not the case overall as, according to the MPA Atlas, 8,3% of the Ocean is under some kind of protection and only 2,7% is fully or highly protected. It’s time to move forward toward effective Ocean conservation with a real 30x30 target : to empower local communities, scientists, and institutions to replicate effective solutions. We have the tools, and it’s up to you decision-makers to let the ressources flow. It’s up to you to make success stories the norm rather than the exception.

Thank you for the floor