

Skipper & Wool Statement

The ocean's unique natural and social fingerprints

There is a need to understand the unique natural and social fingerprints everywhere in the ocean, to be able to forecast and to relate sustainably with marine ecosystems. It is time to change from mending ocean socio-environmental problems to proactively predicting human impact and so reduce ocean socio-environmental problems.

Aligned with the main theme of the Conference: “2022 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” and focused on the interactive dialogues: i) Promoting and strengthening sustainable ocean-based economies, in particular for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries and ii) Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Skipper & Wool sends the following statement:

“Five great truths are increasingly evident in our understanding of our oceans, and it is important that this Conference and the resulting Actions will consider the importance of each:

- A. The SDGs are not mutually exclusive; much to the contrary, our understanding of any aspect of our environment and its sustainability can only be understood in its context within the holistic complex. To conserve and promote the sustainable use of our oceans, we need to be directly addressing not only SDG 14 but also many of the other SDGs too, in particular for Small Island Developing States and the Least Developed Countries.
- B. The ocean is much more than a continuous homogeneous expanse of water; it is highly heterogeneous. We cannot and must not attempt to apply one-size-fits-all solutions to the issues facing our oceans and seas. Each expanse of water has its own and very specific natural fingerprints resulting from a multiplicity of factors such as depth, temperature, salinity, current and tides; and these are not constant — they change with each season and even the seasons are changing with global warming. Our scientific learning and mechanisms must be fluid, not static, able to reflect an oceanic and climatic context in flux. Our initiatives must be coherent, yet specific to each site in the ocean, and able to predict and anticipate impacts.

- C. Each of us and each community has a unique relationship and experience of the ocean — there is not a single perspective of the ocean, and it is important that we seek to understand the ocean’s social fingerprints. There are many different professions, sectors, communities, and cultures around the world interacting with the ocean. We need to understand and respect the many perspectives that contribute to our relationship with the ocean in order to be able to effectively communicate and understand how to motivate communities to implement sustainable practices.
- D. Evolving from a reactive to a more predictive dynamic in the way we interact with the ocean will be important. If we are merely reactive, we will always be attempting to catch up with the consequences of our activities. More precise predictive capabilities will enable us to better anticipate consequences, enabling decision-makers to make better decisions.
- E. The understanding necessary for us to meet the challenge for finding a sustainable future for our ocean and our planet it is to work out how we may unite the extraordinary resource that is the ocean experience and sensitiveness to the ocean natural and social fingerprints of generations in coastal communities with the latest nature and social scientific knowledge.”

Póvoa de Varzim, Portugal, June 15th, 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Miguel Marques".

Miguel Marques
Skipper & Wool Founding Partner
Blue Info Global Leader