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Third Because the Ocean Declaration:

A PLURILATERAL INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF A MULTILATERAL OCEAN OUTCOME AT COP26

31 October 2021

Because the Ocean, an initiative joined by a group of UNFCCC Parties since COP21 has spearheaded the link between ocean and climate change, **promoting actions to give scientific weight to this indivisible interaction and achieving concrete initiatives:**

- The first declaration (2015) promoted the invitation to the IPCC to produce the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, which recognizes the importance of the ocean in mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- The second declaration (2016) sought the inclusion of the ocean in the second ambition cycle and the Global Stocktake, and encouraged Parties to submit climate strategies, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) where appropriate, that promote ambitious climate action to minimize the effects of climate change on the ocean and contribute to its protection and conservation. Out of the 120 revised NDCs submitted to date, 80 now include ocean-based solutions for climate mitigation and/or adaptation (including marine and coastal nature-based solutions, marine renewable energy or the greening of the shipping sector as a component of Parties' domestic implementation plans).

Because the ocean and climate relationship was reinforced by the COP25-mandated Ocean and Climate Dialogue of December 2020, **there is a wider recognition of the need to:**

- Elevate and strengthen the profile and consideration of the ocean across existing UNFCCC processes and other relevant fora;
- Recognize and amplify synergies, complementarities and collective efforts across the United Nations system, conventions and programmes and other relevant organisations and processes, in particular those on biodiversity;
- Reinforce action at the national level to integrate ocean and climate action in policies; and
- Strengthen and integrate support for the ocean in global climate action funds.

Because the ocean has a fundamental role of enabling Life on Earth, including producing 50% of the oxygen in the atmosphere, absorbing about 25% of human-produced carbon dioxide emissions and 90% of excess heat in the climate system, and supporting the livelihoods of 3 billion people on Earth and regulating the global climate, **we must ensure the conservation of the ocean by:**

- Committing to ambitious emission reduction targets in NDCs and to achieving carbon neutrality as soon as possible, and preferably by no later than 2050 to be consistent with the IPCC's mitigation pathways compatible with 1.5° in the context of sustainable development;
- Building ocean science capacity, innovation and knowledge transfer, to improve knowledge and to better conserve and enhance ocean ecosystems' functions and services;
- Collaborating on transformational ocean science for ocean action that can move us from the "ocean we have" to the ocean we want;
- Strengthening our support for existing relevant initiatives and developing new action-oriented initiatives where needed, in an effort that is consistent with and supportive of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration both mandated by the UN General Assembly for the period 2021-2030;
- Mobilising decision-makers and all actors to urge and support the conclusion of an ambitious new agreement under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) in 2022 and its entry into force as soon as possible.

Because the ocean needs effective and sustainable management, increased regional and international cooperation, and protection for resilience and adaptation to climate change, **we must:**

- Take into account the multiple sustainability and feasibility constraints of certain technologies (e.g. geoengineering) with regard to their predictability over time, their negative impacts on marine ecosystems and ecosystem functions and structure, and the deviation risk from the trend towards net zero GHG emission;
- Promote the role of marine nature-based solutions such as Marine Protected Areas, in providing climate adaptation, resilience and mitigation, while preserving biodiversity and coastal ecosystems' important function as "blue carbon" sinks and for climate adaptation;
- Support environmental impact assessment of human activities planned or undertaken within the ocean, that may cause significant and harmful changes to the marine environment and apply a precautionary approach (e.g. large scale fishing, oil and gas exploration, deep-sea mining, etc.);
- Strengthen international ocean governance, including by better integrating multilateral processes and promoting cooperation across institutions and initiatives.
- Strive for greater mitigation action to preserve and protect the ocean, including through the communication and implementation of ambitious NDCs, and also for example by championing a target to protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030, as well as greater ocean-based adaptation taking into account the latest climate science, in particular IPCC reports and guidelines,
- Highlight the importance of the Global Climate Action Agenda and its ocean and coastal zones thematic area for ocean action.

- Increase attention and commitments on ocean-climate change resilience in regional fora such as Regional Seas conventions and commissions, as appropriate, as well as regional fisheries Management Organisations or Arrangements.

Because the ocean needs to be protected on a global and comprehensive scale, **for example by:**

- Supporting efforts to achieve a target to protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030, as championed by the Global Ocean Alliance, the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, and the Blue Leaders at the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), and concluding as soon as possible in 2022 on-going UN negotiations on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ);
- Supporting proposals to designate new Marine Protected Areas in the Southern Ocean under the aegis of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR);
- Improving and accelerating efforts to phase out greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the framework of the Organization's Initial Strategy.

Because the ocean's role (including through blue carbon from coastal ecosystems, the greening of shipping, and offshore renewable energy) was highlighted by, for example, the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere, the Ocean Pathway Partnership and the High-Level Panel on a Sustainable Ocean Economy as one of the solutions for addressing global warming and achieving global targets to limit climate change, it requires urgent attention from State and non-State actors **through a collaborative environment which takes into account the different realities and capacities of countries.**

Committed to the implementation of SDG 13 - Climate action and SDG 14 - Life below water in the context of Agenda 2030 as a whole, we **pledge for the global ocean and climate:**

1. To support the adoption of **COP26 decision language** reflecting and building on the richness of the discussions held at the Ocean & Climate Dialogue, **including:**
 - a. Integrating relevant ocean aspects in the already existing work of constituted bodies, work programs and mechanisms under the UNFCCC and other relevant fora,
 - b. Convening a follow-up Ocean & Climate Dialogue to consider how to strengthen mitigation and adaptation action in this context,
 - c. Encouraging UNFCCC Parties and financing institutions and mechanisms to integrate ocean-climate-biodiversity linkages in their strategies and plans required to implement the Paris Agreement,
 - d. Advocating for synergies and cooperation with other UN/international bodies within their respective mandates,
 - e. Recognizing the need for more ambition by all on tackling climate change and on protecting the ocean.

2. To **strive for**:

- a. Improvement and acceleration of efforts to phase out greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping through the framework of the IMO, and
- b. Further development of clean offshore renewable energy sources, taking into account possible impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems.

3. To **advocate for**:

- a. Strengthening the sources of support for climate adaptation and mitigation in the ocean, including by enhancing the role of the private sector together with, among others, multilateral development banks, climate funds, bilateral Overseas Development Assistance and other International Financial Institutions,
- b. Integrating ocean-based measures into Parties' mitigation and adaptation action under the Paris Agreement, taking into account the latest climate science including IPCC reports and guidelines,
- c. Inviting the IPCC, through the mechanisms allowed by its Principles, to review the carbon sequestration capacity of all coastal ecosystems, including kelp forests, and the impact of other anthropogenic activities on them, and consider including their impact in a future revision of the 2013 IPCC Wetlands Supplement,
- d. Fostering the exchange of knowledge and good practices among members, such as reviewing beyond inventories the possible introduction of relevant ocean-related considerations into climate strategies, including for the implementation of NDCs, through partnerships, including the International Partnership for Blue Carbon and the NDC Partnership,
- e. Giving consideration to the ocean in the Global Stocktake as appropriate, based on its agreed scope and its role to inform NDCs and national plans.

With support from:



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