

IUCN Key messages

Scaling up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions Second UN Ocean Conference, Lisbon, 27 June – 1 July 2022

General remarks

IUCN welcomes the increasing recognition and importance given to the ocean since the first UN Ocean Conference in 2017 and also welcomes the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030 to strengthen scientific understanding of the ocean.

IUCN notes with regrets that none of the targets to be met by 2020 have been achieved. IUCN urges UN Member States to take increased action to meet all targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and redouble efforts to achieve those with an already lapsed 2020 timeline. In this regard, IUCN encourages States to adopt a strong, action-oriented political declaration at the 2022 UN Ocean Conference.

Recognizing that synergistic action is more urgent than ever, IUCN also calls on States to commit to the adoption of an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDGs 14 and 15.

Further, IUCN exhorts all Parties to conclude, in 2022, an ambitious international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), to conclude in 2024 negotiations on an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, and to adhere to, ratify and implement other international law instruments that address ocean and marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Regarding voluntary commitments, IUCN notes that to ensure a meaningful contribution towards a healthy ocean, and a just transition towards a low carbon and sustainable blue economy these must rely on a supportive framework for their monitoring, reporting and verification.

Finally, IUCN highlights the importance of promoting proactive, effective, equitable, inclusive, gender-responsive implementation of SDG14 and the need to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities including their free, prior, and informed consent, and the full recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and resources, as set out under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

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Implementation of the SDG14

In the years following the first UN Ocean Conference in 2017, there has been increased recognition that the ocean underpins human existence. Volumes of scientific data and findings such as the various reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Second World Ocean Assessment, among others, tell us of the state of the ocean today and the actions needed to continue benefitting from a healthy ocean. However, without concrete follow-ups, as well as continuing targeted and coordinated efforts by all, ocean health is under significant threat of being irreversibly damaged. **It is crucial to step-up and accelerate action to preserve the coastal and marine environment for future generations and to ensure sustainable and inclusive development for all.**

Climate Change

The IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (2018), the IPBES Global Assessment (2019), the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and the Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (2019), and the recent contribution of the Working Group II to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2022) all forecast major negative global impacts of climate change on the ocean and coastal communities. These include the loss of up to 70–99% of the world's coral reefs¹, a projected decline of 13% in fisheries distribution and revenue value², ocean warming, marine heatwaves, sea level rise, ocean deoxygenation and other impacts of climate change for the three billion people reliant on the ocean for food and livelihoods.

IUCN urges UN Member States to:

¹ Coral reefs would decline by 70-90 percent with global warming of 1.5°C, whereas virtually all (> 99 percent) would be lost with 2°C. [Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments – IPCC](#)

² Pörtner, H.-O., D.C. Roberts, H. Adams, I. Adelekan, C. Adler, R. Adrian, P. Aldunce, E. Ali, R. Ara Begum, B. Bednar-Friedl, R. Bezner Kerr, R. Biesbroek, J. Birkmann, K. Bowen, M.A. Caretta, J. Carnicer, E. Castellanos, T.S. Cheong, W. Chow, G. Cissé, S. Clayton, A. Constable, S. Cooley, M.J. Costello, M. Craig, W. Cramer, R. Dawson, D. Dodman, J. Efitre, M. Garschagen, E.A. Gilmore, B. Glavovic, D. Gutzler, M. Haasnoot, S. Harper, T. Hasegawa, B. Hayward, J.A. Hicke, Y. Hirabayashi, C. Huang, K. Kalaba, W. Kiessling, A. Kitoh, R. Lasco, J. Lawrence, M.F. Lemos, R. Lempert, C. Lennard, D. Ley, T. Lissner, Q. Liu, E. Liwenga, S. Lluch-Cota, S. Lösckke, S. Lucatello, Y. Luo, B. Mackey, K. Mintenbeck, A. Mirzabaev, V. Möller, M. Moncassim Vale, M.D. Morecroft, L. Mortsch, A. Mukherji, T. Mustonen, M. Mycoo, J. Nalau, M. New, A. Okem (South Africa), J.P. Ometto, B. O'Neill, R. Pandey, C. Parmesan, M. Pelling, P.F. Pinho, J. Pinnegar, E.S. Poloczanska, A. Prakash, B. Preston, M.-F. Racault, D.

- ✓ Scale up Nature-based Solutions (NbS) – such as the protection, restoration, and sustainable management and use of coastal and marine ecosystems, including coral reefs and blue carbon ecosystems (mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrass meadows) – as a critical contribution to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction alongside their multiple social, economic and environmental benefits, and to integrate them in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and other national climate plans and policies³.
- ✓ Incorporate climate change considerations into the management of fisheries and aquaculture, shipping, mining and other activities in the ocean, as well as in the establishment, management, monitoring and evaluation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)⁴.

IUCN calls on governments and the private sector to:

- ✓ Avoid adverse impacts on coastal and marine biodiversity when undertaking climate change mitigation and adaptation actions such as desalination, storm defences and offshore renewable energy, as well as any future proposals for climate engineering research or its potential deployment.
- ✓ Increase and long-term financing with simplified access to biodiversity and climate finance for coastal and marine projects to support and mobilize all relevant stakeholders, particularly at the local level.

Reckien, A. Revi, S.K. Rose, E.L.F. Schipper, D.N. Schmidt, D. Schoeman, R. Shaw, N.P. Simpson, C. Singh, W. Solecki, L. Stringer, E. Totin, C.H. Trisos, Y. Trisurat, M. van Aalst, D. Viner, M. Wairu, R. Warren, P. Wester, D. Wrathall, and Z. Zaiton Ibrahim, 2022: Technical Summary. [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, M. Tignor, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösckke, V. Möller, A. Okem (eds.)]. In: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösckke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.

³ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-032](#) Ocean impacts of climate change

⁴ Simard, F., Laffoley, D. and J.M. Baxter (editors), 2016. *Marine Protected Areas and Climate Change: Adaptation and Mitigation Synergies, Opportunities and Challenges*. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2016.14.en>

Marine Protected and Conserved Areas

Noting the growing global consensus that a target to conserve at least 30% of the ocean, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, is needed, and recognizing that marine spatial planning is a tool that allows for the reinforcement of the necessary protection of marine and coastal ecosystems through the a priori assessment of impacts, including cumulative impacts, **IUCN calls on UN Members States to:**

- ✓ Commit to protect at least 30% of the ocean with a focus on sites of particular importance for biodiversity, in well-connected systems of protected areas and OECMs by 2030 in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- ✓ Strengthen and reinforce implementation of international targets in the light of the pressing challenges and a changing ocean.
- ✓ Accurately report their MPAs and OECMs taking into account the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas Standard and IUCN Guidance^{5,6,7,8}. These provide recognised definitions, categories and guidelines to help deliver benefits and avoid suboptimal results such as ecosystem decline and species loss.
- ✓ Consider coastal and marine protected areas in the wider land/seascape with other OECMs and area-based management tools (ABMTs) including through Marine Spatial Planning and Strategic Environmental Assessment to ensure comprehensive, inclusive and equitable decision-making⁹.
- ✓ Engage local communities and stakeholders in the development and implementation of community-based marine areas, such as Locally Managed Marine Areas, recognizing the important role of indigenous peoples and local communities in conserving coastal and marine areas and resources under their management.

Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)

Considering the urgent need to rebuild global ocean health, productivity and resilience and

safeguard marine life in ABNJ, **IUCN urges Member States to conclude, in 2022, the negotiation of a new and ambitious international legally binding instrument, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in ABNJ, ensuring that it provides for**¹⁰:

- ✓ Expedient identification, establishment and management of an ecologically representative, well-connected, well-managed network of effective MPAs, including a substantial portion of which are highly and fully protected, and other ABMT in ABNJ through a transparent, science-based process.
- ✓ Rigorous, integrated, independent, science-based assessment, management and monitoring of the individual and cumulative effects of human activities, and climate change on marine biological diversity in ABNJ.
- ✓ Acquisition of scientific data necessary to the achievement of its objectives in line with the [FAIR Principles](#).
- ✓ Strategic environmental assessments.
- ✓ Ensuring that, if environmental impact assessments find that an activity poses significant adverse effects to ABNJ, such activity is managed to prevent such impacts or not permitted to proceed.
- ✓ Effective monitoring, compliance and enforcement, and best environmental standards, including transparency best practices.
- ✓ Effective capacity building and transfer of marine technology; and
- ✓ Fair and equitable access to and sharing of benefits, which may include monetary and non-monetary, from marine genetic resources from ABNJ.
- ✓ Effective collaboration with existing bodies, including Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) for coordinated action on the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources in ABNJ.

To ensure coherence in approaches and outcomes in conserving and sustainably managing marine

⁵ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-055](#) Guidance to identify industrial fishing incompatible with protected areas

⁶ <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/resources/iucn-wcpa-best-practice-guidelines-protected-area-managers-series>

⁷ IUCN-WCPA Task Force on OECMs, (2019). Recognising and reporting other effective area-based conservation measures. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2019.PATRS.3.en>

⁸ ICES (2021): ICES/ IUCN-CEM FEG Workshop on Testing

OECM Practices and Strategies (WKTOPS). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8135>

⁹ IUCN Recommendation [WCC-2020-Rec-112](#) Planning of maritime areas and biodiversity and geodiversity conservation

¹⁰ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-128](#) Acting for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in the ocean beyond national jurisdiction

biodiversity in ABNJ, **IUCN also calls upon States to support and implement a moratorium on deep seabed mining**, issuing of new exploitation and exploration contracts and the adoption of seabed mining regulations for exploitation, including “exploitation” regulations by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), unless and until the conditions set forth in IUCN Resolution WCC-2020-Res-122 have been satisfied¹¹.

Further, IUCN encourages governments to accept, ratify, implement, and enforce instruments that implement international law that can enhance ocean and marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Ocean Pollution

Recalling UNGA Resolution 71/312 “Our ocean, our future: call for action” and noting the conclusions of the sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6, 2019) and the required “Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy – a Vision for Protection, Production and Prosperity” by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (2021), IUCN calls for immediate action to better understand, regulate, prevent and significantly reduce the immediate, long-term and cumulative effects of marine pollution of all kinds on marine life and ecosystems, human health and food security.

In relation to pollution from land-based activities:

- ✓ IUCN welcomes the 2022 Resolution by UNEA 5.2 to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, and calls for it to introduce measures for the prevention and significant reduction of discharges of plastic to the ocean, in partnership with relevant stakeholders¹².
- ✓ IUCN urges States to take part in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) discussions to ensure effective protection of the ocean through the consideration of the need for a change in the current regulation of ocean pollution (Annex IV of the MARPOL Convention), including updating of Annex IV

of the MARPOL Convention and its guidelines to introduce provisions on record keeping and measures to confirm the proper functioning of wastewater treatment plants across their entire life cycle¹³.

Noting that ocean-linked industries are predicted to grow faster than the global economy from 2010 to 2030¹⁴, and that noise production is associated with much of ocean-based economic activity and that it can disrupt vital life functions of many marine species, **IUCN calls for:**

- ✓ States and international community to implement long-term solutions for effective policy and management commitments to address cumulative underwater noise pollution, the impacts of which can be significantly reduced through existing and emerging options for effective mitigation and regulatory action¹⁵, ranging from technologies and operational management measures to area- and species-specific measures.
- ✓ The application of the best-available noise-reduction and fuel-reduction technologies, especially regarding commercial shipping, and to encourage the implementation of the IMO guidelines for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life (circular MEPC.1/Circ.833)
- ✓ The application of the precautionary principle and implementation of measures, based on scientific evidence, to manage certain human activities within and adjacent to MPAs, the Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) and the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), e.g., voluntary actions, speed limits, use of best-available technologies and redesign of shipping routes.¹⁶

Sustainable use of marine biological resources

Globally, direct exploitation of fish and seafood have had the largest impact on marine biodiversity¹⁷ with fishing affecting thousands of

¹¹ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-122](#) Protection of deep-ocean ecosystems and biodiversity through a moratorium on seabed mining

¹² IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-019](#) Stopping the global plastic pollution crisis in marine environments by 2030

¹³ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-028](#) Updating of the legislation to stop the pollution of oceans caused by the discharging of wastewater by ships

¹⁴ OECD (2016). <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/16e4aefb-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/16e4aefb-en>

¹⁵ Chou, E., Southall, B., Robards, M. & Rosenbaum, H. (2021). International policy, recommendations, actions and

mitigation efforts of anthropogenic underwater noise. *Ocean & Coastal Management*. 202. 105427.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2020.105427>

¹⁶ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-113](#) Restoring a peaceful and quiet ocean

¹⁷ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. (2019). Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services (summary for policy makers). IPBES Plenary at its seventh session (IPBES 7, Paris, 2019). Zenodo.

species that are caught in a targeted or incidental manner, many with poor scientific information and without precise, monitoring, regulation and control. The FAO 2020 State of the World's Fisheries & Aquaculture Report shows that in those areas of the world where management is effective, stocks are harvested at a sustainable level. However, over 34% of the world stocks are still fished at unsustainable level and more attention is needed to be given to the collateral impact of fishing on non-target species and habitats.

IUCN urges States to¹⁸:

- ✓ Ensure that all fisheries management, is compatible with conservation of threatened marine species (across entire ranges), vulnerable habitats and human well-being.
- ✓ Remove perverse incentives for unsustainable fisheries, including harmful subsidies.
- ✓ Work with regional fisheries management organisations to establish mitigation measures in order to achieve a substantial reduction in bycatches, the main cause of the non-natural mortality of megafauna and other endangered species.
- ✓ Support scientific research and harmonization of data collecting protocols - and enhancing cooperation in scientific research and the sharing of data to better understand the relationship between climate and the health and productivity of the oceans.
- ✓ Leverage funding and build capacities across regions to ensure effective fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture across all regions of the world.
- ✓ Enhance the contribution of effectively-managed fisheries and sustainable aquaculture to biodiversity conservation by incentivizing biodiversity mainstreaming in fisheries, adopting the Ecosystem-based Approach to fisheries
- ✓ Involve Indigenous Peoples, their knowledge and traditional aquaculture practices into aquaculture management strategies to reconcile sustainable management of coastal fishing resources and food safety¹⁹.

IUCN also calls for increased investment in research about the impacts of existing and

emerging sectors, including but not limited to offshore renewable energy on marine biodiversity, and increased application of the mitigation hierarchy, a widely used tool that guides users towards limiting as far as possible the negative impacts on biodiversity from development projects, to ensure a positive outcome on marine biodiversity.²⁰

Gender and Indigenous Peoples

IUCN recommends all States to:

- ✓ Affirm the importance of promoting proactive, effective, equitable, inclusive, gender-responsive solutions in implementation activities.
- ✓ Embrace the crucial role women and men alike play in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- ✓ Ensure SDG 14 strategies and achievements complement and enhance action toward cross-cutting Goals such as SDG 5, focused on advancing gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls, in an integrated manner.
- ✓ Support and empower community-driven initiatives led by and benefitting women and men alike, such as sustainably managed marine areas, at local, national and regional scales, to ensure food, water and economic security while enhancing resilience to the differentiated impacts of climate change.
- ✓ Integrate gender responsive reforms and their implementation by equally considering the needs, priorities, knowledge and experiences of men and women alike in marine and coastal ecosystems.
- ✓ Ensure the means of implementation of SDG 14 account for the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples, and their conservation, economic, social, and cultural traditions and aspirations, including access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources.

IUCN stands ready to provide technical support to promote and support the actions described above.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3553579>

¹⁸ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-107](#) Reducing the impact of fisheries on marine biodiversity

¹⁹ IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-045](#)-EN Global Indigenous Network for Aquaculture (GINA)

²⁰ Bennun, L., van Bochove, J., Ng, C., Fletcher, C., Wilson,

D., Phair, N., Carbone, G. (2021). Mitigating biodiversity impacts associated with solar and wind energy development. Guidelines for project developers. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN and Cambridge, UK: The Biodiversity Consultancy. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/49283>