

OCEANS ACTION DAY AT COP 23: 11 NOVEMBER 2017

Oceans Action Day, part of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, took place on 11 November 2017, in Bonn, Germany, on the sidelines of the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was organized by the: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO); Global Ocean Forum; Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Ocean and Climate Platform; Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan; and Oceano Azul Foundation/Oceanário de Lisboa, Portugal, in collaboration with Conservation International; Future Ocean Alliance; Government of Chile; Government of Grenada; Government of Seychelles; Plymouth Marine Laboratory; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; ROCA Initiative; Scripps Institution of Oceanography; and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Participants at Oceans Action Day heard presentations from over 70 speakers, including Heads of State, ministers, and representatives from governments, agencies, civil society, academia and the private sector. Presentations highlighted progress on the most pressing topics in relation to oceans and climate change, and reflected on the diverse efforts of the ocean community to identify and implement swift solutions. Participants heard lessons learned, examples, and best practices for replicating and transferring successful experiences on a multitude of ocean-related topics including: ecosystem-based adaptation; energy and oceans; scientific research; fisheries and aquaculture; blue carbon; migration; risk management; and financial mechanisms.

Oceans Action Day also saw the signing of the 'Because the Ocean' declaration: towards ocean-related NDCs by the UK, Finland, Honduras and Romania. These countries joined 28 other signatories supporting the inclusion of oceans in NDCs.

BRIEF HISTORY OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND OCEANS

Climate change is considered to be one of the most serious threats to sustainable development having adverse impacts on the environment, human health, food security, economic activity, natural resources, and physical infrastructure. Climate change is also having a profound impact on the world's oceans. Ocean warming directly impacts humans and ocean life – from sea



Peter Thomson, Fiji, UN Special Envoy for the Ocean and President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, speaks during the closing plenary

level rise and increased storm intensity to habitat shifts and receding coastlines. This in turn disrupts ocean and coastal food webs, making it harder for fish, seabirds, and humans to find food necessary for survival. These changes drastically impact vulnerable coastal and island areas, sometimes resulting in loss of life, damage to infrastructure, the economy, tourism and fisheries, and possible displacement of populations.

In addition, oceans absorbed approximately 30-50% of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by humans over the last 200 years, resulting in ocean acidification with substantial impacts on ocean chemistry and life.

WORLD OCEAN CONFERENCE: The World Ocean Conference in Manado, Indonesia, took place from 11-15 May 2009. The primary outcome of the meeting was the Manado Oceans Declaration, which stressed the importance of having oceans on the climate change agenda at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in Copenhagen, Denmark, and beyond.

OUR OCEAN CONFERENCES: The Our Ocean Conferences, launched by the US Government, have taken place since 2014. They focus on key ocean issues, including marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate-related impacts on the ocean.

The first conference, held in 2014, resulted in the development of the Our Ocean Action Plan, and US\$800 million worth of new partnerships and initiatives. The second conference, which

took place in October 2015 (in Chile), generated US\$2.1 billion in commitments on oceans, including on creating and expanding marine protected areas (MPAs) and addressing marine debris and pollution. The third conference, which took place in September 2016 (in the US), resulted in over 136 new initiatives on marine conservation and protection, as well as new commitments on the protection of approximately four million square kilometers of ocean.

The fourth Our Ocean Conference, hosted by the European Union, was held in Malta on 5-6 October 2017. The conference resulted in 437 commitments, EUR 7.2 billion in financial pledges, and 2.5 million square kilometres of additional MPAs.

OCEANS DAY AT UNFCCC COP21: The Paris Oceans Day, convened in the Rio Conventions Pavilion, at UNFCCC COP 21, in Paris, France on 4 December 2015. It addressed: the challenges and opportunities in the context of climate and oceans; the effects of climate change on oceans, and on coastal and small island developing States (SIDS) populations; mitigation and the oceans; adaptation, and financing for adaptation; capacity development, scientific monitoring, and public education; and a five-year agenda for action.

OCEANS DAY AT UNFCCC COP22: The event convened on 12 November 2016, in Marrakech, Morocco, and was held in the official zone for the first time in the history of COPs. The day included: high-level addresses by ministers, scientists, private sector representatives, and policy makers who elaborated on policies, action plans, initiatives and commitments to implement the Paris Agreement, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 (life below water) and work towards fulfilling their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

UN OCEANS CONFERENCE: The high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 was held from 5-9 June 2017, at UN Headquarters in New York. The conference, co-hosted by the Governments of Fiji and Sweden, included the participation of approximately 4,000 delegates, including 16 Heads of State. The conference resulted in an intergovernmentally agreed Call for Action; and the registration of 1328 voluntary commitments by governments and other stakeholders.



The dais during the opening plenary. L-R: **Biliana Cicin-Sain**, President, Global Ocean Forum, and ROCA Initiative; **Inia Seruiratu**, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, Fiji, High-Level Champion for Climate Change Action; **Rene Castro**, FAO; and **Karmenu Vella**, European Commission.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

OPENING

Rene Castro, Assistant Director General, FAO, said that the Oceans Action Day goal is to muster support for the oceans action agenda and showcase action on oceans.

Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, Fiji, said oceans are warming and acidifying at an alarming rate. He emphasized that disruptions on food chains and aquatic ecosystems are impacting human life and welfare, particularly in SIDS.

Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs, and Fisheries said oceans account for over a half of carbon sequestered. He highlighted initiatives by major corporations to protect oceans and coastal areas.

Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum, and Roadmap to Oceans and Climate Action (ROCA) Initiative, described a picture of increased urgency, with worsening trends on warming, storm intensity, sea level rise, coral reef bleaching and diminishing Arctic ice coverage. She suggested an annual coordination meeting between the climate and the oceans processes.

Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany, underscored the importance of making people understand that oceans, despite being vast, are under threat. He noted marine litter can be seen from satellite imagery.



Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany

Julio Cordano, Chile, emphasized the need for international cooperation on oceans, underscoring oceans as vital for human survival.



Ronald Jumeau, Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the UN

Ronald Jumeau, Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the UN, noted that Fiji has made oceans “flow” into the climate discussion, and discussed Seychelles’ “blue grants.”

Eric Banel, President, Ocean and Climate Platform, and Loreley Picourt, Ocean and Climate Initiatives Alliance, informed about the launch of a report measuring progress on ocean and climate initiatives.

Matti Nummelin, Finland, emphasized the importance of capacity development efforts on oceans.

Arif Havas Oegroseno, Indonesia, called for bringing the ocean issues squarely into the UNFCCC negotiations and invited delegates to the Our Ocean Conference in Indonesia in 2018.

Laura Tuck, World Bank, said that for ocean and coastal communities there is a need to focus on adaptation and resilience.

Taholo Kami, COP 23 Presidency Secretariat, hoped that with Fiji’s leadership, cooperation on oceans will be achieved in the climate agenda.



Arif Havas Oegroseno, Indonesia

SCIENCE AND THE OCEAN (IPCC SPECIAL REPORT ON THE OCEAN AND CRYOSPHERE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE AND OTHER SCIENCE DEVELOPMENTS)

This session, moderated by Vladimir Ryabinin, UNESCO, and Françoise Gaill, National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), France, highlighted ocean research and observation critical to developing climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Hans-Otto Pörtner, Alfred Wegener Institute, provided an update on the development of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate.

Carol Turley, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, warned that surface warming, sea level rise and ocean acidification are happening simultaneously, and in the same places, needing action now.

Lisa Levin, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, emphasized the importance of the “deep ocean,” which comprises 50% of the planet’s surface and 95% of its habitable volume.

Margareth Copertino, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande, underscored that coastal areas are among the most threatened in the world, explaining that 50% of mangroves and salt marshes globally have disappeared.

Suchana Chavanich, Chulalongkorn University, cautioned that 90% of coral reefs will be threatened by 2030, and all of them by 2050, requiring urgent science-based management and capacity building.

Phillip Williamson, University of East Anglia, said emissions reduction is not sufficient, favoring active greenhouse gas (GHG) removal.

Jay Manning, International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification, said the Alliance is working on building resilience through, *inter alia*, establishing MPAs and public education.

Discussions ensued on: the meaning of the global stock take; the depletion of oxygen in the atmosphere; and ocean “dead-zones” resulting from human activities.

RESILIENCE OF FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE TO CLIMATE CHANGE: FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD APPROACHES

In this session, moderated by Manuel Barange, FAO, panelists explored approaches to building fisheries and aquaculture resilience to climate change.

Oumar Guèye, Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy, Senegal, provided examples of climate impacts on oceans in Senegal, and listed resilience measures, including: artificial reefs; increasing minimum fish size requirements; MPAs; upgrading fishing infrastructure; and aquaculture.

Gabriella Bianchi, Norwegian Institute of Marine Research, reported on the EAF-Nansen programme. She outlined key aspects of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), including adaptive management and participation.

Sylvie Goyet, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), outlined SPC’s work in providing scientific knowledge for the sustainable development of the Pacific. She emphasized the challenge of migrating fish stocks and associated impacts on communities.

Ernesto Peñas Lado, European Commission (EC), underlined the displacement of fish species and called for an improved and more equitable multilateral fisheries governance. He also stressed the need for adapting aquaculture development plans with a focus on research and capacity building.



The dais during the session on “Science and the Ocean.” L-R: **Kirsten Isensee**, IOC-UNESCO; **Margareth S. Copertino**, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande; **Hans-Otto Pörtner**, Alfred Wegener Institute; **Suchana Chavanich**, Thailand; **Carol Turley**, Plymouth Marine Laboratory; **Françoise Gaill**, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; **Vladimir Ryabinin**, UNESCO; **Lisa Levin**, Distinguished Professor, Scripps Institution of Oceanography; **Phillip Williamson**, University of East Anglia; and **Jay Manning**, International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification.



The dais during the session on “Resilience of Fisheries and Aquaculture to Climate Change.” L-R: **Manuel Barange**, FAO; **Oumar Guèye**, Senegal; **Sylvie Goyet**, Secretariat of the Pacific Community; **Gabriella Bianchi**, Norwegian Institute of Marine Research; **Ernesto Peñas-Lado**, European Commission; **Angus Garrett**, Seafish; and **Yogi Yanuar**, Indonesia.

Angus Garrett, Seafish, UK, outlined UK fisheries industry approaches to climate challenges, including responses to northerly migration of North East Arctic cod. He observed the need for multi-stakeholder involvement, systems approaches, and responsive adaptation.

Yogi Yanuar, Indonesia, presented efforts to enhance the role of local fishers to build resilience in the Anambas Islands. He emphasized the importance of mutual trust and strong commitment to empower communities as stakeholders in fisheries management.

During the ensuing discussion, questions covered the impacts of aquaculture on biodiversity, the role of law, and fair distribution of resources.

BLUE CARBON

This session shared national experiences with blue carbon for mitigation and adaptation. Emily Pidgeon, Conservation International, and Kushla Munro, Australia, moderated the panel. In opening remarks, Munro noted the growing recognition of blue carbon’s importance, and highlighted gaps in understanding its relationship with NDCs.

Dorothee Herr, IUCN, reported on inclusion of blue carbon in NDCs regarding both mitigation and adaptation.

Joshua Wycliffe, Permanent Secretary for Environment, Fiji, reported on Fiji’s NDC implementation. He described a dual approach including protection of infrastructure and replanting of mangroves and traditional tree and root crops.

Maria Victoria Chiriboga, Ecuador, stressed the historic lack of understanding of the importance of mangroves, and described national incentives to protect mangroves.

Nur Masripatin, Indonesia, explained the role of blue carbon in her country’s NDC, saying that coastal systems are important for adaptation and resilience.

Madeleine Rose Diouf Sarr, Senegal, explained the role of oceans in Senegal’s NDC, noting that challenges include the need for finance, displaced coastal communities, and salt water intrusion.

Pascal Girot, Costa Rica, noted that blue carbon was not in his country’s NDC due to ongoing policy development. He stressed challenges including collaboration with the fisheries sector.

The ensuing discussion focused on: lessons learned; incentivizing private sector actors; mobilizing finance; and coral reefs.



The dais during the session on “Blue Carbon.” L-R: **Dorothee Herr**, IUCN; **Joshua Wycliffe**, Permanent Secretary for Environment, Fiji; **Maria Victoria Chiriboga**, Ecuador; **Nur Masripatin**, Indonesia; **Madeleine Rose Diouf Sarr**, Senegal; and **Vladimir Ryabinin**, UNESCO.



The dais during the session on “Accessing Financial Resources and Mobilizing Financial Institutions.” L-R: **Karin Kemper**, World Bank; **Alastair Morrison**, Green Climate Fund; **Jonathan Taylor**, European Investment Bank; **Torsten Thiele**, Global Ocean Trust; **Manuel Barange**, FAO; **Tiago Pitta e Cunha**, Oceano Azul Foundation; **Amedi Camara**, Mauritania; and **Peter Gilmer**, Planet:Tech.

ACCESSING FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MOBILIZING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Moderator Karin Kemper, World Bank, underscored financing needs for adaptation, and highlighted innovative instruments such as blue bonds piloted in the Seychelles.

Alastair Morrison, Green Climate Fund (GCF), said the GCF is country-driven, and focused on climate-impact. He said the GCF will not fund general development projects, although it could co-finance such projects.

Jonathan Taylor, Vice-President, European Investment Bank (EIB), said the EIB had supported the blue economy through the provision of over EUR 8 billion. He underscored the need for enabling environments and incentives for private sector investment in the blue economy.

Torsten Thiele, Founder, Global Ocean Trust, said engaging the private sector directly can provide large scale resilience. He suggested the creation of an Ocean Sustainability Bank, and highlighted the London School of Economics Blue Finance Initiative.

Manuel Barange, outlined the African Package for Climate Resilient Ocean Economies with a target of USD 3.5 billion. He emphasized FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme as a tool to identify blue growth potential.

Tiago Pitta e Cunha, CEO, Oceano Azul Foundation, called for the mainstreaming of natural capital into economics and stated that protecting nature should be considered as an investment rather than a cost

Amedi Camara, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Mauritania, stressed the challenge of calculating the costs of marine and coastal degradation, and discussed coastal erosion in Mauritania.

Peter Gilmer, Executive Director, Planet:Tech, described his organization as a platform dedicated to giving a voice to environmental issues in the tech community.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed: innovation; scalability; long-term investment opportunities in the blue economy; the suitability of using bankability criteria for adaptation projects; subsidies for fisheries; and how to engage local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION IN OCEAN AND COASTAL ZONES: COUPLING NATURAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS TOWARDS A RESILIENT FUTURE

This session, moderated by Isabel Torres de Noronha, Future Ocean Alliance and Adérito Santana, São Tomé and Príncipe, heard examples of integrated ecosystem-based adaptation in ocean and coastal areas.

Jan Szyszko, Minister of Environment, Poland, and COP 24 president, stressed the importance of both reducing GHG emissions soon, cheaply and efficiently, and removing GHGs from the atmosphere.

Arlindo Ceita de Carvalho, São Tomé and Príncipe, presented national adaptation and capacity-building actions, including population engagement and participatory risk mapping.

Chu Van Chuong, Viet Nam, discussed enhancing resilience in Viet Nam through coastal forests, noting integrated and multi-sectoral approaches to transition livelihoods and economies to a “new normal.”



Chu Van Chuong, Viet Nam

Kedrick Pickering, British Virgin Islands, asserted that SIDS coastal communities will face the biggest climate impacts, and recounted the effects of Storm Irma on the British Virgin Islands.

Manuel Barange presented examples of fisheries and aquaculture adaptation tools that are being compiled in a toolbox to support adaptation in vulnerable tropical areas.

Inger Andersen, Director General, IUCN, noted that ecosystem-based adaptation is a way to preserve life on Earth, and said it was crucial to understand the buffers that Earth provides.



Arlindo Ceita de Carvalho, São Tomé and Príncipe

Elena Malinovska, EC, summarized coastal resilience actions in Europe, namely under the EU-LIFE programme, noting that 40% of the EU population lives on the coast.

Tamara Thomas, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), underscored that 62,000 people are displaced by climate change every day, and shared TNC's solution to climate risk, natural insurance.

Abdullahi Majeed, Maldives and UNFCCC Chair for Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), warned that climate change is already impacting the capacity of marine ecosystems to provide, *inter alia*, food, recreation and culture, and underscored that SIDS' existence depends on the ocean.

Peter Ricketts, President, Acadia University, noted that we may be at a tipping point where engineering solutions can no longer manage coastal storm impacts resulting from climate change, so new response measures are needed.

MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT: RISK REDUCTION AND PREPAREDNESS

Moderator Miko Maekawa, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, said migration should be by choice, with dignity, and not by force. Highlighting preparedness, she emphasized that displacement should be the last resort, but not the last-minute resort.

Co-moderator Carl Bruch, Environmental Law Institute, said there is a proliferation of initiatives on climate displacement, stressing the need to link them.

Enele Sopoaga, Prime Minister, Tuvalu, said oceans should be a UNFCCC COP issue, and urged discussion on a legal framework for climate-displaced people. He emphasized those displaced by climate are not refugees, and that even after displacement, climate change will persist. Sopoaga declared that "Tuvalu will never give up."

David Stevens, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), noted climate displacements already equal nearly a third of conflict displacements globally. He urged strategies to reduce the risk of displacement and increase resilience of displaced people.

Kosi Latu, Director-General, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, said that even if land disappears due to sea level rise, rights to maritime zones should be maintained.

Filipe Nainoca, Director General, Fiji Red Cross Society, stressed the links between disaster response and migration. He said science should inform local adaptation action. Nainoca emphasized communities need outside assistance in reaching the decision to move.

Walter Kaelin, International Law Association, said legal developments on climate displacement should be based on human rights principles.

Koko Warner, UNFCCC Secretariat, identified patterns around human displacement, including: extreme weather events; climate impacts on livelihoods; and conflict.

Mikiyasu Nakayama, University of Tokyo, said provision of assistance should not be differentiated between migrant workers and climate refugees. He noted climate refugees differ from others in having more time to prepare.

Atle Solberg, Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), said climate risks are changing in an unknown way, noting the need for more data and knowledge.

In the ensuing discussion, participants discussed, maintaining identities of displaced peoples, and no-regret measures.

CLOSING

The closing plenary was moderated by Ronald Jumeau.

Biliana Cicin-Sain, noted that the trends are getting worse, but that "we have seen amazing political mobilization at the global level."

Manuel Barange, emphasized that scientists are bringing information to the table, which needs to be connected to the spatial and temporal scales to bring about quick action.

Peter Thomson, highlighted that "the good news is that we have a plan to save the ocean, SDG14 (oceans), which binds us all to act now."



Members of the panel on migration and displacement



L-R: **Tommy Remengesau**, President, Republic of Palau; **Ronald Jumeau**, Seychelles; **Peter Thomson**, Fiji, UN Special Envoy for the Ocean and President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly; **Biliana Cicin-Sain**, Global Ocean Forum; and **Manuel Barange**, FAO

Tommy Remengesau, President of Palau, said that the links between a healthy ocean, a safe climate, and the communities that depend on them must remain high on the international agenda. He called for immediate and decisive action to rescue and restore the ocean, highlighting that Palau has protected 80% of their marine territory and announced the Our Ocean conference in Palau in 2020.

Eva Svedling, Vice Minister for Climate, Sweden, highlighted the increasing presence of the ocean in climate change discussions.

Anote Tong, former President of Kiribati, noted the importance of generating higher returns from existing resources to build climate resilience, and cautioned participants about the problems brought about by deep sea-bed mining.

Ambassador João Mira Gomes, Portugal, stressed the importance of raising awareness on oceans and oceans literacy, and offered to host an oceans conference in 2020.

Thérèse Coffey, Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), UK, said the UK is on track to fulfill its commitment to create a blue belt by

protecting marine areas in its overseas territories. She stressed that marine climate issues such as acidification can only be addressed through global collaboration.

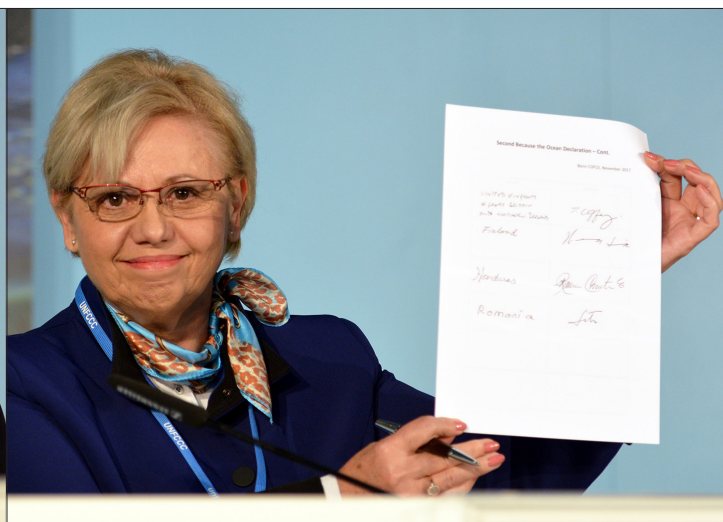
Oumar Guèye emphasized that West Africa is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change impacts on oceans.

Jay Inslee, Governor, Washington State, US, said he is “from the Washington that embraces the Paris Accord.” Stressing the impacts of ocean acidification, Inslee emphasized a coalition of states to combat ocean acidification.

Atsushi Sunami, President, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, underscored that the blue economy must be built on scientific evidence.

Philippe Vallette, Director General, World Ocean Network, emphasized the importance of awareness and education on oceans.

Representatives from the UK, Finland, Honduras and Romania then signed the “Because the Ocean” declaration: towards ocean-related NDCs. They joined 28 other signatories supporting the inclusion of Oceans in NDCs. Oceans Action Day closed at 18:35pm.



Representatives from Honduras (left) and Romania after signing the “Because the Ocean” declaration