

# HIGHLIGHTS

# World Oceans Day

8 June 2015, UNESCO

## On the road to COP21



The UN World Oceans Day, the 8th of June 2015, was organized jointly by IOC-UNESCO and the “Ocean and Climate Platform”, an alliance between civil society, scientific institutions, companies, intergovernmental organizations, related to Ocean and Climate. Celebrations took place six months ahead of the Paris Climate Conference (COP21), mobilizing 1200 representatives of the youth, scientific community and civil society through a day of discussions with participation of decision makers and Heads of State.

**This collective engagement produced key messages under four themes:**

### *What does the science tell us? Ocean Health and Human Life*

Ocean warming and ocean acidification are two sides of the same coin: increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions cause dramatic changes in the physics, chemistry and biology of the ocean, ultimately impacting humankind.

Adaptation strategies are helpful local short-term strategies, but reducing global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is the only long-term solution.

This requires improving the human and technological capacity to conduct science, especially in the Southern Hemisphere and the SIDS.

Observing and monitoring vulnerable areas must be a priority.

**We have scientific knowledge enough to know it is time for ACTION NOW!**

### *How to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the ocean?*

Management tools such as Marine Spatial Planning and regional conventions can ensure multi-stakeholder ocean governance and provide regional fora for collective actions.

Innovation in monitoring threats to the ocean and reducing additional cumulative impacts from pollution and shipping are key to sustainably use marine resources.

Legal, regulatory and economic instruments can bolster a low-carbon blue economy and highlight the ocean as a driver of sustainable growth.

Increasing the number and extent of Marine Protected Areas, including in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction – the “high seas” – can increase ocean resilience to climate change and conserve biodiversity.

**Innovative financial mechanisms are needed to sustain the ocean agenda.**

### *Where does the Ocean come in the UNFCCC negotiations?*

Prioritizing adaptation policies through effective international and regional cooperation (i.e. Regional Seas programme) is key to safeguarding vulnerable coastal States and communities from climate change impacts.

Private and public stakeholders must ask UNFCCC Member States for stronger commitments on the Ocean and Climate agenda.

**Negotiations must acknowledge the role of a healthy ocean as repository of biodiversity and long-term carbon storage areas.**

### *What the ocean community expects from the UNFCCC COP21?*

Action: uncertainties should not be an excuse to delay decisions.

Global reductions in fossil fuels use, decarbonizing of energy systems and greater energy efficiency.

**A limit of 2°C atmospheric average warming until 2100. Higher temperature levels will cause irreversible damage to the ocean and, consequently, human health.**



# A Call for Action

Too few decision-makers know that protecting our climate begins with protecting our ocean, but together we can reverse this perception gap. The mobilization of youth, civil society, enterprises, scientists and decision-makers during the June 8th World Ocean Day celebrations at UNESCO resulted in a major Call for the Ocean and Climate. It is a major and global effort to have a clear positive impact on the climate negotiations:

## Addressed to:

### The signatory countries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The ocean, notably absent from negotiations despite playing a major role in climate regulation, must be taken into account in the future United Nations global climate regime.

It is equally necessary that the ocean – which covers two thirds of the world's surface area – is explicitly integrated into future global climate regime in order to:

1. Heighten the ocean's capacity to mitigate climate change, through protected and functioning marine ecosystems able to capture CO<sub>2</sub>,
2. Address the adaptation challenges faced by coastal and nearshore regions, island countries often being the most vulnerable,
3. Integrate projects related to sustainable management and the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity into climate finance mechanisms, in particular those projects that concern protected marine areas,
4. Develop innovative solutions in energy, food and maritime transport industries,
5. Continue to invest in scientific research in order to better understand ocean-climate interactions and consequently influence political action.

**A healthy ocean means a protected climate.  
Together, let's give the ocean a voice.**

## Sign the Call **NOW** @ [ocean-climate.org](http://ocean-climate.org) and help us bring the Ocean into COP21!

For more information about World Ocean Day 2015  
Visit: <http://www.ioc-unesco.org/>  
Contact: [ioc.secretariat@unesco.org](mailto:ioc.secretariat@unesco.org)

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