

Summary of the High-Level Event on Ocean Action: 7-8 June 2024

Imagine a world where the Ocean is teeming with vibrant marine life and pristine coral reefs. The waters are clear of pollution, biodiversity flourishes, and ecosystems thrive in balance, supporting abundant fisheries, regulating the climate, and providing endless opportunities for cultural identity, recreation, and health for generations to come. Such a world is indeed possible, and it is this optimism that has driven the international community to rally for ocean restoration under the umbrella of the 2021-2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade) and turn the tide against the impacts of the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution.

Recent years have seen intensive efforts to show progress during the Ocean Decade, with milestones including: the completion of the negotiations for the new UN Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including the marine environment (global plastics treaty).

Following these milestones and two recent ocean-related meetings—the 2024 UN Decade Conference and the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)—the High-Level Event on Ocean Action, themed “Immersed in Change,” convened to maintain momentum and serve as a preparatory meeting for the Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) to be held in Nice, France, in June 2025. UNOC-3 will convene under the theme “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean.”

The main outcome of the High-Level Event on Ocean Action was delivered through the [Peace for the Ocean Declaration](#), signed by over two dozen countries expressing commitment to scaling up transformative ocean actions to support nature-positive economies based on the best available science and scientific information, traditional knowledge, and innovation. The Declaration also reaffirms commitments to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (life below water), and outlines priority ocean actions for the six years remaining under both the Ocean Decade and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including: accelerating climate action; ratification and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement; supporting the completion of the global plastics treaty; and strengthening the Ocean science-policy interface.

The outcomes of the event, as noted by several delegates, extend beyond speeches and commitments. The partnerships forged over the two-day meeting will ensure that the momentum built continues to accelerate into UNOC-3 and beyond. The primary goal of these partnerships is to enhance ocean data and its application to guide ocean action, as well as to mobilize the necessary financial resources to achieve a healthy and restored Ocean for generations to come.

The High-Level Event on Ocean Action took place from 7-8 June 2024 in San José, Costa Rica, with the participation of more than 1500 delegates from over 40 countries, including Heads of State and Government, ministers, ocean experts, and leaders from international organizations and civil society.

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A Brief History of the UN Ocean Conferences

In September 2015, Heads of State and Government adopted [Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), including 17 SDGs and 169 targets. SDG 14 (life below water) contains ten targets, addressing: marine pollution; marine and coastal ecosystems; ocean acidification; overfishing and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices; conservation; harmful fisheries subsidies; economic benefits for SIDS and least developed countries; and, as means of implementation, increasing scientific knowledge, providing access to resources and markets for small-scale artisanal fishers, and implementing international law, among others.

First UN Ocean Conference: The first 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 aimed to: identify ways and means to support the implementation of SDG 14; build on existing successful partnerships and stimulate innovative and concrete new partnerships to advance the implementation of SDG 14; involve all relevant stakeholders; share experiences gained at the national, regional and international levels in the implementation of SDG 14; and contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda, by providing input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Spearheaded by Fiji and Sweden, the conference was largely considered a success in building momentum for the implementation of SDG 14, as a central rather than isolated component of the 2030 Agenda. The conference produced three outcomes: an intergovernmentally agreed Call for Action; a registry of 1,328 voluntary commitments; and key messages from the partnership dialogues.

Second UN Ocean Conference: After the success of the first UN Ocean Conference, the UN General Assembly, through resolution 73/292, convened the high-level 2020 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 in Lisbon, Portugal, from 2-6 June 2020, under the overarching theme “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions.”

Through the same resolution, the General Assembly also initiated a preparatory process, co-facilitated by Denmark and Palau, which met for the first time from 4-5 February 2020. At that meeting, participants considered the themes for the interactive dialogues and the elements of a brief, action-oriented and agreed intergovernmental declaration. Participants also initiated informal consultations on the draft political declaration to be adopted by the Conference.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020 the UN General Assembly took the decision (A/74/L.48) to postpone the Conference to a later date. The conference finally took place in Lisbon, Portugal, from 27 June to 1 July 2022. The Conference featured debates on, among other things: marine pollution; strengthening ocean-based economies; managing, protecting, conserving, and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems; and increasing scientific knowledge, developing research capacity, and undertaking the transfer of marine technology. Delegates announced over 300 voluntary commitments, with approximately 50 high-level commitments and pledges, including an investment of at least USD 1 billion to support the creation, expansion, and management of marine protected areas (MPAs) and Indigenous- and locally-governed marine and coastal areas by 2030, a commitment made by the [Protecting Our Planet Challenge](#).

The Conference also adopted a Political Declaration, “Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility,” which reaffirms participants’ strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources, and call for greater ambition at all levels to act decisively and urgently to improve health, productivity, sustainable use, and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems.

Important Turning Points

UN Ocean Decade 2021-2030: Proclaimed in 2017 by the UN General Assembly, the UN Ocean Decade seeks to stimulate ocean science and knowledge generation to reverse the decline of the state of the Ocean system and catalyze new opportunities for sustainable development. Its vision is “The science we need for the Ocean we want.” The Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for scientists and stakeholders from diverse sectors to develop the scientific knowledge and partnerships needed to accelerate and harness advances in ocean science to achieve a better understanding of the Ocean system, as well as deliver science-based solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The UN General Assembly mandated the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC/UNESCO) to coordinate the preparations and implementation of the Ocean Decade.

The Ocean Decade identified [ten Challenges](#) and launched [Vision 2030](#), a strategic ambition-setting process to identify a common measure of success for each of the ten Challenges on the road to 2030.

New Multilateral Agreements: Several major milestones towards the sustainable use and conservation of the Ocean have been achieved in the international negotiation arena since the second UN Ocean Conference in 2022. Notable achievements include the adoption of the [GBF](#) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) [Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies](#), [the BBNJ Agreement](#), and the on-going negotiations for a global plastics treaty.

2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference: This conference took place from 10-12 April 2024 in Barcelona, Spain, to take stock and celebrate achievements three years after the start of the Ocean Decade. The main Conference outcome was the [Barcelona Statement](#), which identifies three sets of priorities: ocean knowledge and science generation to inform management decisions; improved infrastructure including for marine pollution monitoring and ocean observations; and cross-cutting issues such as co-designing initiatives and embracing all knowledge systems.

High-Level Event on Ocean Action Report

On Friday morning, 7 June, delegates were welcomed to Costa Rica with performances including dancing, live painting, conch shell music, and more. In opening remarks, Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, urged delegates to halt the decline in the Ocean’s health on behalf of intergenerational justice, noting their task at this event is to share ideas and resources towards a resilient future for generations to come.

Hervé Berville, Minister of State for Marine Affairs, France, highlighted recent steps in addressing ocean issues, including his country’s proposal for a precautionary pause on deep-sea mining, and the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement.

Arnoldo André Tinoco, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Costa Rica, pointed to the Peace for Ocean Declaration and urged participants to take on the Declaration’s commitment which is “as vast as the Ocean,” to implement joint solutions for a sustainable future for all.

Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and UNOC-3 Secretary-General, highlighted the relevance of the unanimous adoption of the [Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity](#) from the recently concluded Fourth International Conference on SIDS and expressed that ocean protection is now an imperative and no longer an option.

Rodrigo Chaves Robles, President of Costa Rica, expressed hope that Costa Rica's successes in conserving marine resources can serve as examples of good practice for the international community. He said that the future of the planet depends on our ability to rescue the Ocean from impending disaster, and the way to achieve this is by acting on our commitment to the Ocean and making better decisions for the people and the planet.

Emmanuel Macron, President of France, via video message, noted the international community's mobilization over recent years in prioritizing the Ocean. He thanked Costa Rica for being a source of inspiration for all to implement commitments to protect marine resources. He highlighted the importance of the outcome of the High-Level Event in intensifying collective efforts for ocean action and as a forerunner of UNOC-3.

Following the opening, deliberations on the meeting theme and thematic areas proceeded through a series of eight parallel panel sessions where experts shared knowledge, information, initiatives and innovations to support evidence-based ocean action. The two-day meeting also featured 24 side events where diverse organizations and civil society showcased advances in their programmes and projects. During a high-level session, senior government representatives reiterated their commitment to the Ocean Decade and the Peace for the Ocean Declaration, which was circulated prior to the Immersed in Change Event, and signed by twenty states.

Panel Session: Satellite Technology for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Ocean

On Friday, this panel focused on the importance of open access, infrastructure investment, and capacity building for satellite technology.

In introductory remarks, Olivier Poivre d'Arvor, Special Envoy for the Ocean of the President of France for the UN Ocean Conference, noted the importance of innovative technologies to understand and address ocean challenges. He noted that a main deliverable expected of UNOC-3 is upscaling global and regional ocean observatories to contribute to marine restoration and blue growth.

Moderator Mónica Espinoza Miralles, Global Fishing Watch, noted the importance of accessible and actionable information for solutions that support sustainable use of the Ocean.

Pavarot Noranarttragoon, Department of Fisheries, Thailand, presented on the use of Automatic Identification System and Vessel Monitoring Systems to identify and monitor the activities of fishing vessels. He noted this information is essential for fish stock assessments and regulating fisheries for better fisheries management.

Pierre Bahurel, Managing Director, Mercator Ocean International, said that without Earth Observations, "We are blind to what is happening in the Ocean." He noted the importance of collaboration and discussed the implementation of the European Commission's Copernicus Marine Service, which provides free and open access to ocean data and information.

Susan Ruffo, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, US, highlighted efforts towards designing a "system of systems" of

in situ Earth Observations to address ocean and climate challenges. She presented best practices, highlighting the International Argo Program, the largest *in situ* ocean data observation program.

Claire Jolly, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), presented economic data and reported that the Ocean has, over the last 25 years, outperformed overall economic growth. She highlighted the rapid growth of ocean digitalization and its significance for sustainable use of the Ocean.

Rodney Martínez Guingla, World Meteorological Organization, drew attention to the openly accessible vast amounts ocean-relevant satellite data and information, complemented by meteorological and hydrological data. He urged better coordination and collaboration for its meaningful use for the Ocean.

In concluding remarks, Franz Tattenbach, Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, shared best practices of using satellite technology, exemplified in the recently published [General Management Plan for Cocos Island National Park](#).

Panel Session: Sustainable Blue Economy

On Friday, this panel showcased the frontiers, interlinkages, and opportunities in operationalizing a whole-of-society and whole-of-government blue economy approach.

In an opening address, Alicia Montalvo, Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), highlighted the need for strategic, coordinated actions, including initiatives that survive beyond the duration of governments and administrative regimes.

Moderator Valerie Hickey, Global Director of Environment, Natural Resources and Blue Economy, World Bank, stressed redressing past fundamental mistakes, namely the paradigm shaped in the 19th century of extractive economies, and of undertaking conservation at the expense of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs).

Beverly Wade, Director, Blue Bonds for Financial Permanence Unit, Belize, noted national targets must be home-grown, reflecting domestic priorities while aligning with international environmental commitments.

Alexis Grosskopf, Founder and CEO, OceanHub Africa, shared experiences of the OceanHub platform in the creation of a community of practice that addresses the ideation gap of technology aspirations versus capabilities in the incubation-growth pyramid of innovations for entrepreneurs.

Luis Lombana, CEO, Ficosterra, urged focus on cost-effective approaches of technology transfer, sharing experiences from a programme using seaweed to reduce the quantity of nitrogen and phosphorus used in agriculture without compromising crop yields.

Ana Gloria Guzmán Mora, Executive Director, Conservation International Costa Rica, said IPLCs should be integrated in projects from their outset. She reported on bottom-up initiatives that build on Indigenous local knowledge to inform national-level programmes and shared that entrepreneurship should be developed with the potential of becoming investable.

Santiago Bucaram Villacís, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), highlighted initiatives for debt-for-nature swaps and for channeling financial resources to overcome credit constraints for enterprises. He emphasized the need to identify obstacles and to address information asymmetries that create higher perceptions of risk.

In closing remarks, Patricia Ricard, Chair, Paul Ricard Oceanographic Institute, reported that aquaculture is a major contributor to global fisheries' deterioration due to the use of wild

fish to produce farmed fish food. She highlighted opportunities to convert current commercial food waste into aquaculture feed to close sustainability gaps in the sector.

Panel Session: Sustainable Use of Fishing Resources

On Friday, this panel focused on the promotion of responsible use of fisheries resources to counteract the effects of climate change, conserve threatened marine species, guarantee food security, and contribute to improving the quality of life of coastal and island communities.

In a keynote address, Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission, highlighted several milestones reached for sustainable fisheries, including the [Agreement on Port State Measures](#) and the BBNJ Agreement. She reaffirmed the EU's commitment to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the Ocean.

Moderator Manuel Barange, Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, and Assistant Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), highlighted the key concerns for fisheries resources due to overfishing, challenges to sustainable fishing, climate change, and biodiversity loss.

Paubert Mahatante, Minister of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Madagascar, elaborated on actions to finalize and implement their national action plan for small-scale fisheries, including distributing fishing licenses, restoring mangroves, and building relevant infrastructure.

Santiago Bucaram Villacís, IDB, emphasized the importance of a holistic approach that combats poverty, supports IPLCs, and strengthens governments to achieve marine resource protection and conservation commitments.

Alifereti Tawake, Council Chair and Technical Advisor, Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) International Network, said communities have deep-rooted connections to nature and LMMA management tools are important in integrating culture and tradition in solutions to achieve sustainable fisheries.

María Eugenia Fernández, President, Association of Small-Scale Artisanal Fishers of Palito-Chira Island, Costa Rica, shared experiences of surveillance and responsible fishing activities, pointing out the importance of small-scale fishers as “small actions add up to big results.”

Nicole Franz, FAO, presented key findings from the [Illuminating Hidden Harvests](#) study, which found among others, that small-scale fisheries account for 40% of the total global fisheries catch.

In closing remarks, Manuel Morales Diaz, Costa Rica, reiterated the importance of eliminating IUU fishing, which undermines conservation efforts and sustainable use of fishing resources.

Panel Session: Scientific Development to Address Marine Plastic Pollution

On Friday, this panel focused on recent scientific practices and tools to address marine plastics pollution. Panelists discussed the efficiency of these technologies, impacts on marine resources, and opportunities for scaling up.

During introductory remarks, Hervé Berville, Minister of State for Marine Affairs, France, said while the drastic extent of plastics pollution in the Ocean is well-studied, the impacts of microplastics “are still uncharted territory.” He emphasized the imperative for an ambitious treaty on plastic pollution by the end of 2024, and the need to operationalize the science-policy panel to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.

Susan Gardner, Director of Ecosystems Division, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), moderated the session, calling for facilitating the replication of best practices globally and empowering communities of practitioners to develop tools to address marine pollution.

Karol Ulate Naranjo, National University of Costa Rica, discussed initiatives, including on management of abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear. She noted that recent surveys have revealed microplastics in freshwater fish on Cocos Island from springs previously considered remote and pristine.

Najat Mokhtar, Head of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), outlined the IAEA's growing network of marine laboratories providing, among others, baseline data for the negotiations for the global plastics treaty.

Clemence Schmid, Director, Global Plastic Action Partnership, reported on efforts to build an inclusive evidence base to support partners in developing comprehensive and complementary approaches to achieving transformative plastics and wastes reduction.

In a video message, Masanori Kobayashi, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, outlined key recommendations for actions to eliminate marine plastics through sound waste management systems, focusing on challenges faced by SIDS.

Boyan Slat, Founder and CEO, The Ocean Cleanup, highlighted the importance of using a two-pronged approach to tackle the inflow of plastics from the land into the Ocean while simultaneously addressing “legacy” pollution.

Yasushi Noguchi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, highlighted the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision to reduce additional plastic pollution to zero by 2050. He stressed citizen and stakeholder involvement alongside scientific knowledge exchange as major drivers in tackling plastic pollution.

Concluding the session, Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Development, Norway, stressed that plastic pollution is a transboundary issue, and highlighted the role of science in supporting the development of an impactful global plastics treaty.

Panel Session: Fight Against Ghost Fishing Gear

On Saturday, this panel explored the different impacts of ghost fishing gear, the ways that stakeholders can address this problem through existing diverse programmes and partnerships, and the steps that can be taken for the future.

In opening remarks, Arsenio Domínguez, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO), highlighted the IMO's efforts to ensure that merchant ships become responsible ocean users.

Moderator Heiner Méndez Barrientos, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Costa Rica, emphasized that the problem of abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear also referred to as ghost fishing gear needs an inclusive and participatory approach.

Kelsey Richardson, FAO, reported on the FAO's work to address ghost fishing gear, such as the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear](#).

Anjali Acharya, World Bank, underscored the support provided by the World Bank to countries in their fight against ghost fishing gear, such as the PROBLUE programme, which includes marine litter and pollution as a main pillar.

Carmen Castro, National Coast Guard, Costa Rica, shared her country's experience in recovering and recycling fishing gear in the Gulf of Nicoya.

Guillermo Molina, Latin American Alliance for Sustainable Fisheries, highlighted the relevance of collaborative circular economy strategies in addressing ghost fishing gear.

Hannah Pragnell-Raasch, Global Ghost Gear Initiative, noted the upcoming global plastics treaty can serve as a framework to address the governance of ghost fishing gear, which remains fragmented.

The panel closed with an award ceremony recognizing the efforts of the OneSea Organization, which leads the Ocean Defenders Fisheries Sector initiative.

Panel Session: Resource Mobilization and Blue Financial Mechanisms

On Saturday, this panel addressed the complexities, opportunities, and partnerships for the blue economy, shared experiences of the breadth of new and existing blue financial mechanisms, and discussed ways of closing the finance gap for the Ocean.

Opening the session, Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility (GEF), emphasized that the lack of coherence in governance and policy is a critical obstacle to overcome for effective resource mobilization and allocation.

Moderator Emmanuel Baudran, Deputy Executive Director, French Agency for Development, underscored that resource mobilization comprises both financial and human resources.

Marcela Betancourt Muñoz, IDB Invest, presented on blue bond investments in the Latin American and Caribbean region that have created opportunities for businesses and investors to integrate conservation goals in their practices. She stressed the need to facilitate companies measuring and reporting on nature-related impacts.

Camilo Santa Peña, IDB, reported on the IDB's Natural Capital Lab, and highlighted an array of financial tools available to countries and non-state actors, including biodiversity offsets and debt-for-nature swaps.

Alicia Montalvo, CAF, stressed the importance of strengthening commitments to increase resource mobilization. She pointed to the need for enabling environments for projects and for common understanding and definition of issues addressed under the blue economy.

Torsten Thiele, Founder, Global Ocean Trust, highlighted the need to develop a regenerative blue economy that is purposeful in addressing ocean health, net-zero goals, and nature positive outcomes, further pointing to the need for innovative financial mechanisms that include insurance for natural assets at risk.

Panel Session: Global Access to Ocean Cleaning Technology

On Saturday, this panel showcased clean-up technologies and compared their deployment, effectiveness, and scaling-up for wider use to tackle plastics and other pollutants in rivers and the Ocean.

Muthalagu Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, India, said innovative clean-up technologies are key in tackling marine pollution, thereby restoring and protecting fragile marine ecosystems. He noted the importance of collective progress facilitated by technology transfer, scaling up successes, and outreach and awareness.

Moderator José Pablo Murillo, Stockholm International Water Institute, noted the importance of tackling pollution through prevention at the source, and deployment of cleaning technologies. He highlighted the key role of international agreements for collective strategies and solutions to combat marine pollution.

Zoie Diana, University of Toronto, spoke on the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Collection Technology Inventory, an online open-

access inventory of technologies developed to collect plastics from water. She highlighted gaps in studies of their effectiveness and on impacts such as marine species by-catch.

Boyan Slat, Founder and CEO, The Ocean Cleanup, presented cutting-edge technology developed for efficiently collecting waste from large-scale fresh and marine water areas. He reported success stories, highlighting positive impacts for fisheries due to improved coral reef and mangrove ecosystems.

Yolanda Marina Vargas-Rodriguez, National Autonomous University of Mexico, discussed innovations to decontaminate water and recover crude oil using nanotechnology. She discussed successful laboratory results with potential for deployment in oil spill events.

Lydia Barfleur, Caribbean Sargassum Programme, reported on efforts to eradicate Sargassum blooms in the region due to their negative impacts on fisheries, tourism, and marine habitats. She reported her organization's advocacy to include actions to eradicate Sargassum at UNOC-3 to ensure international cooperation in finding sustainable solutions.

Panel Session: Implementation of International Agreements for Ocean Governance

On Saturday, this panel focused on the importance of transforming words into action by strengthening multilateralism to effectively implement international agreements for timely and efficient achievement of global ocean targets.

The Panel was opened by Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and UN Legal Counsel, who highlighted that ambitious ocean action is possible through a two-tier approach: strengthening the implementation of and compliance with commitments, and complementing legally binding measures with voluntary mechanisms.

Alberto van Klaveren Stork, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chile, stressed that coherent action and consistency is required to generate the necessary connections within the international framework to achieve global targets.

Moderator Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, emphasized the keyword for this panel was "effective implementation," noting it is absolutely essential for a healthy ocean.

Giuseppe Di Carlo, Director, Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy, highlighted the need for synergies in the implementation of international agreements to strengthen ocean governance, including in the management of MPAs.

Pradeep Singh, Research Institute for Sustainability, Helmholtz Center Potsdam, underlined the importance of informed decision-making in areas beyond national jurisdiction and the need to be guided by relevant normative principles, such as precaution.

Rita El Zaghoul, Director, High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People Secretariat, shared the importance of resource mobilization to build states' capacity to support the implementation of the GBF 30x30 target.

Tiago Pitta e Cunha, CEO, Oceano Azul Foundation, recommended seven concrete actions for ocean restoration and protection: recognition; developing a roadmap for achieving the 30x30 target; mobilizing global ratification of the BBNJ Agreement; a precautionary pause on deep-sea mining; a ban on bottom trawling; cohesive and strengthened global ocean governance; and preference for small-scale fisheries within territorial waters.

High-Level Segment on Ocean Action

On Friday, in a session moderated by Arnoldo André Tinoco, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship, Costa Rica, high-level officials shared ongoing national ocean conservation initiatives and reiterated their commitments to restore ocean health.

Hervé Berville, Minister of State for Marine Affairs, France, said his country intends to become the first EU country to ratify the BBNJ Agreement. He also reported plans to invest in marine seabed exploration and decarbonization of the maritime sector.

Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Saudi Arabia, mentioned the Saudi Green Initiative launched to support implementation of the 30x30 target. He reported on a comprehensive survey of the Red Sea that led to the discovery of new ecosystems and rare marine species.

Laurențiu Dăncuță, Chargé d'Affaires, Holy See, conveyed Pope Francis' appeal to restore values of water as a gift of the Lord, citing St Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Creatures," in which water is described as useful, humble, precious, and chaste.

Alberto van Klaveren Stork, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chile, reiterated his country's offer to host the BBNJ Secretariat in Valparaíso, which has yet to be approved by the parties.

Roberto Álvarez, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dominican Republic, emphasized the need to address the impacts of Sargassum blooms on Caribbean countries and to declare these disruptive annual blooms as a regional environmental emergency.

Albert Ramchand Ramdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business, and International Cooperation, Suriname, said while his country is carbon negative, concerns remain on impacts of sea level rise on food security due to loss of arable land.

Omar Paganini, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uruguay, said his country is promoting conservation of key biodiversity areas through MPAs in line with implementation of the 30x30 target.

Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Cooperation, Norway, as Co-Chair of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, reported the Panel's commitment to advance ocean sustainability and conservation. She said her country intends to be among the first to ratify the BBNJ Agreement.

Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Qatar, mentioned programmes to manage marine waste and eliminate single-use plastics.

Sade Fritschi, Minister of Environment, Water, and Ecological Transition, Ecuador, called for the High-Level Event to herald a "new era of cooperation for the Ocean," encouraging building on experiences for successful ocean governance.

Bettina Hoffmann, Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection, Germany, stressed strong multilateral cooperation and highlighted national strategies, including to restore natural carbon sinks in the Ocean.

Carlos Márcio Bicalho Cozendey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil, emphasized the Ocean is a top priority for Brazil in its role as the G20 president, and outlined support for international efforts including establishment of the South Atlantic Sanctuary for whales under the International Whaling Commission.

Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Vice-Minister of Multilateral Affairs, Colombia, highlighted regional collaboration such as the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor, welcoming strengthened ambitions for ocean health.

José Fidel Santana Núñez, Vice Minister of Science, Technology, and Environment, Cuba, stressed the need for continued progress

beyond political will, through simplified financial mechanisms, strengthened capacity building, and a global plastics treaty.

Iryna Borovets, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine, stressed the disastrous environmental impacts of war, highlighting challenges of implementing measures for post-war environmental recovery efforts.

Mahlet Mesfin, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State, outlined national priorities for the Ocean and reiterating commitment to regional and international initiatives, including the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation.

Charlina Vitcheva, Director General, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission, pointed to the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution ([UNEP/EA.6 Res.15](#)) on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution. She further welcomed the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

Paola Di Chiaro, Secretary of the Malvinas Islands, Antarctica, Ocean Policy and South Atlantic, Argentina, reiterated commitments to implement national and multilateral plans, including increased MPA coverage, stronger biodiversity protection in marine coastal areas, and signing the BBNJ Agreement.

Hugo Morán, Secretary of State for the Environment, Spain, reported his country's goal of protecting 25% of areas within jurisdictional waters by 2025 and commitment for financial support to improve protected area management. He further highlighted his country's support for the Blue Mediterranean Partnership.

Lídia Bulcão, Secretary of State for Maritime Affairs, Portugal, outlined actions undertaken to develop more protected areas, reporting on the creation of an MPA in the Algarve reef in 2023. She shared an upcoming ambitious plan for marine renewable energies.

Eric Anderson Machado, Secretary General of the Chancellery, Peru, expressed support for the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Rena Lee, Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore, noted the current global momentum for the BBNJ Agreement and shared that Singapore was working towards its ratification.

Jón Erlingur Jonasson, Special Envoy for the Ocean, Iceland, noted the attainment of international goals such as those of the GBF can be actualized through the thorough implementation of UNCLOS.

Filipo Tarakinikini, UN Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN, reaffirmed commitments to operationalize the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and to meet GBF 30x30 targets.

Christine Pirenne, Netherlands Ambassador to Costa Rica, reported on the implementation of a national committee for the Ocean Decade, contributing to commitments for best available science and scientific information.

Logbook Sessions: Sharing Knowledge on the Ocean

Logbook sessions provided a platform for a diversity of contributions on initiatives and projects that are delivering on the theme of the Ocean Decade "the science we need for the Ocean we want".

The first logbook session on Friday was moderated by Alison Clausen, Deputy Global Coordinator of the UN Ocean Decade, IOC/UNESCO. Julian Barbière, IOC/UNESCO, remarked that the Ocean Decade has enabled resource mobilization for more coordinated ocean research, and noted that more needs to be done to align

science with policy needs, namely through clearer “policy triggers” and mechanisms to generate questions for science to answer.

Juan Camilo Forero Hauzeur, Executive Secretary, Colombian Ocean Commission, shared national-level experience of strengthening engagement and impact towards the Ocean Decade commitments, underlining the importance of incorporating ocean science in public institutions and of building dialogues between formalized scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge systems.

Vivienne Solís Rivera, Founder, Coope SoliDar, said few IPLCs are aware of the Ocean Decade, and stressed the importance of fostering understanding and increasing their participation in the lead-up to UNOC-3 to enable them to lobby effectively for their own rights.

Alexander Turra, Chair of Ocean Sustainability, UNESCO Decade of Ocean Science, noted opportunities and spaces for discussions among different actors and interest groups are lacking. He underlined the need to uphold principles of co-design and co-production of scientific information during the Ocean Decade process, and to think beyond the 2030 deadline.

On Saturday, Francisco Javier Urra, Country Representative, IDB, presented on stock markets and innovative financial instruments for the Ocean. He said that while Costa Rica’s marine area is ten times that of its land mass, coastal economic wealth remains underutilized. He outlined plans to invest in leveraging ocean resources for sustainable development.

Markus Reymann, Chair, Alligator Head Foundation, presented the CoralCarib Project, a new strategic approach for conserving and restoring Caribbean coral reef ecosystems as climate resilient refugia.

Antonio Maturani, Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, Italy, summarized the G7 Declaration on the BBNJ Agreement, which includes commitments to: pursue the swift ratification, approval, acceptance, and accession of the BBNJ Agreement by UNOC-3; support developing countries through capacity building and technical assistance; and promote the implementation of [UN General Assembly Resolution 78/272](#) to prepare for the Agreement’s entry into force and first meeting of its Conference of the Parties.

Youth speakers Daniel Cáceres Bartra, Yvonne Montes, and Stephanie Torres, Sustainable Ocean Alliance, summarized the 2024 Blue Latin America Youth Summit Declaration, which will contribute to the joint global youth declaration at UNOC-3. They highlighted calls for acknowledging the role of youth in combating the triple planetary crisis, on areas such as marine pollution, climate change, education, and ocean culture.

Francisco González Alvarado, Dean, National University of Costa Rica, presented proposals and recommendations from the 2024 Scientific-Academic Forum held 3-6 June 2024 in Costa Rica. The Forum outcomes include recommendations for integrating academic and non-academic knowledge to contribute to ocean sustainability.

The 2024 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) Report was officially launched during the logbook session, in a panel moderated by Raffaella Rucci, FAO. In a video message, Qu Dongyu, FAO Director-General, highlighted three key findings of SOFIA 2024: continued growth of fisheries and aquaculture production; stable global and dynamic regional fisheries production; and predicted rise of aquatic animal production by 2032.

Victor Carvajal, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Costa Rica, highlighted the report’s importance for guiding decision-makers, by providing findings, figures, and analyses on key aspects of global fisheries and aquaculture.

Manuel Barange, Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, and Assistant Director General, FAO, further presented main findings from the report, including the fact that that aquaculture has surpassed capture fisheries for the first time as the main producer of aquatic animals reaching an unprecedented global production of 130.9 million tons. He expressed hope that SOFIA 2024 will support the exploration of solutions and strategies to improve the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Paubert Mahatante, Minister of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Madagascar, shared that in his country, aquaculture production has increased since 2022 and that aquaculture is the future of fisheries.

Charlina Vitcheva, Director General, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission, drew attention to that fact that global production of fisheries remains inadequate to meet consumption demand, and urged states to use the SOFIA report to address the potential risks for food security.

Martha Machazek de Serrut, President, Bocas del Toro Artisanal Fishers Union, Panama, reminded participants that the voices of small-scale fishers need to be included in reports to adequately reflect the state of fisheries.

In closing, Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, reiterated the importance of the SOFIA report, particularly for monitoring SDG 14. He expressed hope that information contained in the report would transform ocean action, adding “Action without knowledge is foolishness, knowledge without action is wastefulness.”

Luis Estévez Salmerón, Associate Director, International Government Relations, Ocean Conservancy, outlined the role of offshore renewable energy for achieving global environmental goals and highlighted the need to ensure accessible concessional finances and installation costs. He stressed that a just transition to net-zero emissions safeguards biodiversity.

Alfredo Giron Nava, Head, Ocean Action Agenda, World Economic Forum (WEF), reported on WEF’s priority areas in enabling the transition towards nature positive businesses, using an industry-centric approach to integrate nature-positive actions within calls for tender and contracts.

Kattia Cambronero Aguiluz, Costa Rica, reported on the development of draft legislation to enshrine payments for marine ecosystem services into law. She also reported on objectives to develop a fund enabling the coexistence of economic development and environmental preservation.

Haakon Vatle, CEO, One Ocean Expedition, highlighted the multiple benefits of the circumnavigation expedition run by his organization, including: fostering partnerships, providing a space for education and research, and creating hope among future generations of scientists and civil society for preserving the Ocean.

Closing Session

In the closing session, among festive performances, Laurent Stefanini, UNOC-3 Coordinator, France, emphasized the links between the Immersed in Change Event and the upcoming UNOC-3, expressing hope that these inspiring days in Costa Rica will drive more collaborative work over the coming year.

Gina Guillén Grillo, Director General of External Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Costa Rica, reflected that the High-Level Event has fostered action and “gone beyond speeches,” highlighting outcomes from panel sessions, side events, and in particular the matchmaking event, which will put projects into action, including coral reef recovery and a marine school for women.

Franz Tattenbach Capra, Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, expressed his appreciation for the broad attendance by diverse ocean practitioners to tackle issues that transcend national borders, in the quest for a healthy, resilient, and productive Ocean. He highlighted progress and regional initiatives, including a new collaborative project with the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership for marine natural capital accounting.

Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and UN Legal Counsel, noted the Event portrayed “shared love” and concern for the health of the Ocean. He urged more stakeholder participation at UNOC-3, noting that following the success of the High-Level Event, it is now time to reawaken our commitment to the Ocean.

Rodrigo Chaves Robles, President of Costa Rica, was presented with the outcome document. He also received a letter of commitment to respect the Ocean from the children of Costa Rica and a call for action from women representatives of the Guardians of the Ocean. President Chaves Robles thereafter handed over a symbolic baton to Peter Thomson, who will “carry the commitments of the Peace for the Ocean Declaration” to UNOC-3.

In closing remarks, President Chaves Robles highlighted the need for knowledge, moral integrity, and courage to put policy into practice. As “the time to talk has ended,” he reminded participants that it was now “time to start acting.” He closed the Event at 6:08 pm.

Peace for the Ocean Declaration

The Declaration underscores the crucial role of the Ocean, reaffirms the commitments to achieve SDG 14, and acknowledges that a healthy ocean is essential for both people and nature. It also puts forth 12 Ocean Actions:

- accelerating climate action;
- supporting effective implementation of the GBF;
- working towards entry into force and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement;
- promoting the entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies;
- supporting the completion of the global plastics treaty;
- actively participating in the work of the International Seabed Authority with the guidance of precautionary principle or precautionary approach;
- strengthening the Ocean science-policy interface, including action under the Ocean Decade and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment;
- deploying means of implementation and mobilization of financial and technical resources for the exchange of knowledge and best practices, capacity building, and access to and exchange of technology, especially by coastal communities;
- increasing the establishment of MPA networks, marine reserves, and other effective area-based conservation measures to contribute to the GBF 30x30 target and to achieve a healthy and productive ocean by 2050;
- taking the necessary ocean management actions to conserve, protect, restore, and replenish fish stocks, threatened species, habitats, and ecosystems;
- establishing national and regional sustainable blue economy strategies by 2030; and
- accelerating actions to establish sound management strategies to take all appropriate measures for land-based sources of pollution.

A Brief Analysis of the High-Level Ocean Event

Why do we refer to a single “Ocean,” when we talk about the world’s vast oceans and seas? The answer lies in a recent, purposeful shift towards recognizing that this expanse is a single interconnected system linking coastlines, populations, and habitats. This taxonomic transition has an additional aim: the need to use a concerted and unified approach to tackling the fragmented seascape of ocean issues by finding interconnected solutions.

This is among the main challenges of the 2021-2030 UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (UN Ocean Decade). Despite the call for a streamlined strategy, the breadth of issues faced by the Ocean remains complex, and is geographically and thematically dispersed. Furthermore, the state of ocean affairs continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Many speakers at the High-Level Event on Ocean Action held in San José, Costa Rica, stressed the urgency of turning the tide on the Ocean’s declining health. Participants heard reports on intensified ocean acidification, ocean warming that has begun to spread down the water column, national states of emergency declared around marine ecosystem degradation, and the vulnerabilities of coastal communities to ocean hazards.

Adding to the complexity of these multidimensional threats, ocean governance takes place through a wide variety of international, regional, and national fora and instruments, from regional fishery management organizations to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and beyond. More instruments are being added to this array, such as the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) and the World Trade Organization’s Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and expectations are high for the much-awaited conclusion of the global plastics treaty later this year. Yet unlike other environmental issues such as biodiversity loss or climate change which both occur in and affect the Ocean the Ocean does not have a clear overarching governing structure to address all its interconnected problems.

Alongside the UN Ocean Decade, which is the main “campus” for ocean action, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (life below water) and its targets serve as the main guidance by which progress is measured for conserving and sustainably using the Ocean and marine resources by 2030. The High-Level Event sought to coordinate and gather stakeholders from all streams of ocean life and influence, to share and build on one another’s experiences, and to build momentum on action to restore the Ocean.

This brief analysis considers the complexities of ocean issues and governance; the steps being taken for transformative action as well as broader, but relevant, questions of circularity and meaningful participation; and expectations and steps looking ahead to the Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3), co-chaired by Costa Rica and France, to be held in Nice, France in June 2025.

Siren Call

The ten Ocean Decade Challenges for Collective Impact were the unofficial guiding framework for the two-day High-Level Event. Speakers in panels, side events, and logbook sessions highlighted the interconnectivity of ocean threats and efforts to progress on these issues through cooperation and participation. Many called for much-needed transformative change to facilitate implementing ocean conservation and sustainable use goals. Among these, three key themes floated above the rest: the blue economy, combating plastics pollution, and upholding intergenerational justice.

Circular systems in the Ocean are familiar to the practitioners and scientists present at the meeting. These span more than physical oceanographic processes of upwelling, currents, and tides, however. With many high-level representatives emphasizing that the Ocean is a global “unifier,” the Ocean users at the meeting took this one step further, underlining the circular nature of social and economic as well as environmental ocean systems. This took shape through understanding of the intrinsic connectedness of life above and below water what happens on land affects the Ocean, in the same vein that what takes place in areas beyond national jurisdiction eventually reaches the shore and coastal communities.

During experience-sharing on efforts to tackle marine plastics pollution, discussions focused on the need for holistic considerations. Without eliminating wasteful upstream production practices, the Ocean will continue to accumulate macro- to nano-plastic particles, from its surface to the deep-sea floor. Ignoring the downstream means leaving the significant amount of “legacy” plastic pollution to continue degrading in the Ocean.

Beyond physical pollution, a dimension that held participants’ attention is the close links between ocean and human health and well-being. Researchers reported studies indicating that in certain coastal and agricultural areas, micro- and nano-plastics have been found to cover seeds and shorelines, consequently inhibiting plant growth, and affecting food security and forest cover.

With a single threat capable of having far-reaching and varied impacts, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches may be the key to effectively encompass these negative fallouts. During sessions on resource mobilization and the blue economy, representatives from financial institutions and on-the-ground actors highlighted the need to continue using both top-down and bottom-up strategies for effectively allocating resources and building capacity. Achieving policy coherence while not a low-hanging fruit was highlighted as critical for transforming the current pattern of investments in destructive activities and harmful subsidies. Addressing this, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, stressed that “we are subsidizing our own extinction.”

Alongside these transformations, the need for common understanding and support were areas of convergence. While the definition and interpretation of the blue economy varies across stakeholder groups, speakers agreed on the need for common, accessible language to bring everyone into the know and on board. Some participants shared that they have begun shouldering this responsibility to increase positive impact in these ways. Academics are taking courses to increase their skills in blue diplomacy, and local marine protected area managers have formed regional and international networks to support each other’s initiatives.

Increasing ocean education and awareness was also on the agenda, and although few youth speakers were included in the main Event schedule, their roles and rights were highlighted by many, including the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, Peter Thomson, who expressed hope for future generations to “experience the joys of good nutrition from a healthy Ocean, where biodiversity thrives.”

Big Fish and Small Fry

The meeting was initially designed as a preparatory conference for UNOC-3, following concerns that UNOC-2 may not have generated the desired impact or momentum in making progress on SDG 14. Many participants shared their hope that this Event would be an opportunity to course correct.

While the more formal plenary sessions had a representative mix of institutions, ocean science experts, and practitioners sharing experiences and knowledge, and discussing areas to prioritize moving forward, this was indeed a “High-Level” Event, graced with the presence of presidents, ministers, and ambassadors to showcase political will and build momentum.

As with the Ocean, the ecosystem in San José covered all areas at once. Spaces for dialogues, best practice sharing, and matchmaking for financing replicable conservation success stories were visible and well-used outside the main plenaries, and many praised the organizers for facilitating these opportunities. Others remarked on a disconnect between which voices were spotlighted, and which were not, pointing to poor attendance at an evening ministerial segment, while concurrent side events on deep-sea mining and regional collaboration for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) 30x30 target were overflowing.

Furthermore, representatives from small-scale and artisanal fisheries were in attendance—brightly-colored shoals navigating the conference spaces—and although they were rarely heard in plenary, the two delegates who were invited to be panelists received raucous standing ovations. Small-scale artisanal fishers are integral to the successful implementation of resilient ocean management, and ensuring their involvement and access to resources is a key target under SDG 14. Martha Machazek de Serrut, President of the Bocas del Toro Artisanal Fishers Union, Panama, emphasized the more-than-environmental aspects of the Ocean, saying that “before conservation rights, there are human rights.”

Red Sky at Night, Sailors’ Delight

The short but packed High-Level Event ended on a high note. Among its main outcomes is the Peace for the Ocean Declaration, signed by over two dozen ministers and government representatives. Implementing durable peace requires steadfast alliances, and this Declaration outlines voluntary commitments to strengthen binding commitments under other relevant instruments, including the Paris Agreement on climate change, the BBNJ Agreement, and the GBF.

For many stakeholders, forging partnerships and harnessing momentum were major outcomes for increasing their impact and reach. These included the matchmaking element of the Event aimed to accelerate and scale-out successful ocean conservation and sustainable use projects, by creating partnerships between financial, strategic, and implementing actors. Collaboration at all scales is paramount, and expectations are high as participants look ahead to the bold goals of UNOC-3 in reaching impactful and transformative outcomes for ocean governance. The full, effective, and meaningful participation of all ocean practitioners is a significant challenge to accomplish the whole-of-ocean approach that is necessary.

As Special Envoy Thomson reminded participants, “Knowledge without action is wastefulness.” Thus, harnessing and translating multiple knowledge systems, strengthening ocean data and use across sectors, and innovative resource mobilization and allocation are high on the agenda for decision-makers in the year remaining before they gather at UNOC-3. Crucially, turning the tide is needed with regard to financing for SDG 14, which remains the least well-funded of the 2030 Agenda Goals. As many noted throughout the meeting, this will have to take place in innovative ways, using all available tools, and looking to new partners to “integrate the blue into business as usual.”

Leaving the conference center on Saturday evening, one participant reflected on the symbolic handing over of the baton by Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves Robles to Special Envoy

Thomson, remarking, “Making progress towards a healthy ocean has never been smooth sailing, but this may put wind in our sails to get there.”

Upcoming Meetings

Organizational Meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry Into Force of the BBNJ Agreement and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement: The Preparatory Commission will discuss organizational matters, including the election of the Co-Chairs and a Bureau, the dates of the meetings of the Commission, and the programme of work of the Commission. **dates:** 24–26 June 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/depts/los/bbnj.htm

UN General Assembly (UNGA) Preparatory Meeting for the Third UN Ocean Conference: This one-day preparatory meeting will consider themes for the UNOC’s ten Ocean Action panels and elements for a brief, concise, action-oriented, and inter-governmentally agreed declaration. **date:** 2 July 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2024: HLPF 2024 will take place on the theme, “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.” It will conduct in-depth reviews of SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals). **dates:** 8-17 July 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** hlpf.un.org/2024

36th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI): The 36th session of COFI will address ways to achieve a blue transformation of aquatic food systems. **dates:** 8-12 July 2024 **location:** FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy **www:** fao.org/cofi/en

Summit of the Future: The high-level event will bring together UN Member States, UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs, academic institutions, the private sector, and youth under the theme, “Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow.” The Summit aims to forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like, and what we can do today to secure it. The Summit will adopt “A Pact for the Future” – a concise, action-oriented outcome document, to be agreed in advance by consensus. **dates:** 22-23 September 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/summit-of-the-future

UNGA High-level Meeting to Address Existential Threats Posed by Sea-Level Rise: The UN General Assembly will convene a one-day high level plenary meeting on addressing the threats posed by sea-level rise. **date:** 25 September 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** press.un.org/en/2024/ga11258.doc.htm

UN Biodiversity Conference 2024 (CBD COP 16): COP 16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 11th COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (COP/MOP) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the Fifth COP/MOP of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing will convene for the first time since the adoption of the GBF. **dates:** 21 October - 1 November 2024 **location:** Cali, Colombia **www:** cbd.int/conferences/2024

2024 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29): This event will include the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 29), the 19th meeting of the COP

serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 19), and the sixth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 6) that will convene to complete the first Enhanced Transparency Framework and the NCQG, among other matters. The 61st sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 61) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 61) will also meet. **dates:** 11-22 November 2024 **location:** Baku, Azerbaijan **www:** unfccc.int/cop29

Plastic Pollution INC-5: The fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, will attempt to complete negotiations on the instrument. **dates:** 25 November – 1 December 2024 **location:** Busan, Republic of Korea **www:** unep.org/incplastic-pollution/session-5

Barcelona Convention COP 24: Egypt will host the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols. **dates:** 2025, TBC **location:** Cairo or Alexandria, Egypt **www:** unep.org/unepmap/who-we-are/barcelona-convention-and-protocols

Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3): Co-Chaired by France and Costa Rica, the Conference aims to generate transformative action and provide solutions the Ocean needs, supported by ocean science and funding for SDG 14 (life below water). **dates:** 9-13 June 2025 **location:** Nice, France **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025

For additional upcoming events, see: sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

BBNJ	Biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
MPA	Marine protected area
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small island developing states
Ocean Decade	UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNOC-3	Third UN Ocean Conference
WTO	World Trade Organization