

Toward a Strategic Action Roadmap on Oceans and Climate: 2016 to 2021



Policy Recommendations on Oceans and Climate for Consideration at UNFCCC COP 22 and Beyond

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Please note that this effort represents work in progress and is open to all interested participants from governments, international organizations, NGOs, and private sector wishing to contribute to advancing the issues related to oceans and climate, both within and outside the UNFCCC, in the next five years.

Comments on the policy recommendations contained in this document are kindly invited as are offers of collaboration to develop and implement the strategic actions identified in this document, please send these to Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum, bilianacicinsain@globaloceans.org and to Mr. Julian Barbieri, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, j.barbieri@unesco.org.

Toward a Strategic Action Roadmap on Oceans and Climate: 2016 to 2021

October 2016

Part of the Global Strategic Action Initiative
on Oceans and Climate

Prepared by the International Expert Working Group
on Oceans and Climate*

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*The International Expert Working Group first mobilized in the run-up to the Oceans Day at COP 21, presented initial recommendations at COP 21 in Paris, and then subsequently expanded and refined the analyses and recommendations to produce this Strategic Action Roadmap on Oceans and Climate. The analyses contained in the report represent the perspectives of the co-authors, not necessarily of their organizations.

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Main organizers: The Global Ocean Forum, IOC/UNESCO, UNEP, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, Ocean and Climate Platform, and the University of Delaware Gerard J. Mangone Center for Marine Policy

Co-organizers:

Governments of Grenada, Indonesia, Portugal, Seychelles, South Africa, and Sweden

Intergovernmental/International Organizations: GEF, CBD, FAO, GEF/UNDP/UNEP African Large Marine Ecosystems Project, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Pacific Islands Forum, The Pacific Community, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, the World Bank, the World Meteorological Organization

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Foreword

The ambitious Paris Agreement comes at a key moment in time for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We are the people who live closest to the oceans; we are its beneficiaries and its stewards. We are seeing our life support system begin to fail as the effects of climate change lead to the disappearance of our islands and depletion of our food sources. For decades, SIDS nations have come together to raise global awareness of the unique threats that our people are already facing as a result of anthropogenic climate change, the importance of managing and protecting ocean ecosystems, and the drastic circumstances that may arise if stringent mitigation is not carried out. At the same time, we are also the people who have led the world in providing innovative measures to move toward a low-carbon Blue Economy in our island nations and around the world.

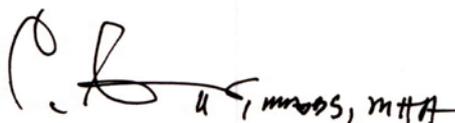
The Paris Agreement represents a victory for island and coastal nations. We have used the phrase “1.5 to stay alive” as a way to emphasize that the target warming limit of 2.0C is simply too high to ensure our very existence as low-lying island nations. It is a landmark achievement that the Paris Agreement calls for mitigation efforts for nations to pursue “efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5C.” In addition to acknowledging this more appropriate warming limit, the Paris Agreement is also notable as the first major UNFCCC agreement to include a mention of the importance of ocean health within the context of mitigating and adapting to climate change.

However, these lofty goals and words must necessarily be supported by concrete and ambitious actions. The successful implementation of the Paris Agreement will be crucial, and strong pre-2020 action is absolutely essential to ensuring the integrity of ocean ecosystems and the very survival of SIDS and coastal populations and their ability to implement Blue Economy approaches for sustainable economic and social development, as called for in Sustainable Development Goal 14 on Oceans and Seas. These actions must not be postponed. For SIDS communities, delay could mean significant loss of land, life, and livelihoods.

This document, *Toward a Strategic Action Roadmap on Oceans and Climate*, represents a comprehensive set of policy recommendations which can help us to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. The urgency that runs through the language of the Paris Agreement, and through this Roadmap, must be given sufficient momentum and resources for the implementation of strong policies to take shape and force in the next five years. The types of actions laid out in this Roadmap should receive appropriate consideration by UNFCCC parties and civil society alike so that we may safely protect island and coastal peoples everywhere and ensure their economic and social sustainable development for present and future generations.



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Executive Summary

This proposed **Strategic Action Roadmap on Oceans and Climate: 2016 to 2021** is intended to provide a vision for action regarding oceans and climate in the next five years—with a sense of urgency in the spirit of the landmark Paris Agreement. The Roadmap addresses six ocean and climate issue areas: The central role of oceans in regulating climate, mitigation, adaptation, displacement, financing, and capacity development. Each section presents the scientific and policy groundwork for a set of policy recommendations relevant to the particular issue. Draft policy recommendations were first discussed at the Oceans Day at COP 21—a high-level event at UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris that brought together over 400 participants to highlight the central importance of oceans as an essential component of human wellbeing, especially in the 183 coastal and island nations around the world—and then were refined in the months following COP21.

The Strategic Action Roadmap was prepared by the International Expert Working Group on Oceans and Climate, composed of 37 experts from the 46 partner organizations of the Oceans Day at COP 21, and coordinated by the Global Ocean Forum; IOC/UNESCO; UNEP; Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan; and the University of Delaware. For each of the major issues within the Strategic Action Roadmap on Oceans and Climate, members of the International Expert Working Group were asked to present: 1) the current status of the issue (and, as relevant, the science related to the issue); 2) the current state of play of the issue within the UNFCCC; 3) the opportunities and pathways that may be available within the UNFCCC to advance the issue in the next five years, 4) the opportunities and pathways that may be available outside of the UNFCCC to advance the issue; 5) financial considerations regarding each issue.

Following the production of this Strategic Action Roadmap report, the **Global Strategic Action Initiative on Oceans and Climate** (involving Parties, IGOs, NGOs, academic institutions, private sector groups, and local authorities) will be launched at COP 22 in Marrakesh, Morocco (November 7 to 18, 2016) to begin implementation of the recommendations contained within this Roadmap. The Initiative will, inter alia: further operationalize the major components, including development of specific targets, indicators, and timetables; mobilize resources; implement specific actions in each of the major areas on oceans and climate jointly with national and local level leaders and other partners; develop a knowledge management and reporting mechanism to report to the COP yearly.

Implementing the policy commendations contained within the Roadmap begins with a strong oceans presence at COP 22, where the partner organizations involved with this Initiative are working closely with the Government of Morocco and other organizers in the coordination of the Oceans Action Day at COP 22, part of the UNFCCC Global Climate Action Agenda. At COP 22 and beyond, the Initiative will organize various meetings to create “alliances of the willing” to implement the recommendations contained in this report and to bring these results into the policy processes associated with the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Readers of the Strategic Action Roadmap on Oceans and Climate should know that this represents an open work in progress, and all UNFCCC Parties, IGOs, NGOs, and academic or private sector institutions are welcome to comment on and contribute to the advancement of oceans and climate issues over the next five years.

Summary of Policy Recommendations on Oceans and Climate

1. *Recognize the central role of oceans in climate and the need to implement stringent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to avoid disastrous consequences on coastal and island communities, marine ecosystems, and ocean chemistry.*

2. Mitigation

Further develop and apply mitigation measures using the oceans, such as implementing “Blue carbon” policies, reducing CO₂ emissions from ships, developing ocean-based renewable energy, and considering (long-term/no-harm) ocean-based carbon capture and storage.

Encourage all nations to reduce CO₂ emissions so that the Paris Agreement to limit emissions to well below 2oC can be achieved.

--Sustainably conserve and enhance coastal ecosystems as major carbon sinks and integrate the management of the coastal carbon ecosystems (“Blue Carbon”) into the policy and financing processes of the UNFCCC, and account for these ecosystems in the national reports to the UNFCCC, the INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions).

--Further accelerate progress in addressing air emissions from ships

--Sustainably develop ocean-based renewable energy (such as offshore wind power, wave energy, tidal power, and aquatic biofuels); and accelerate efforts to implement these approaches through integrated marine planning and enhanced regulatory frameworks

--Consider the potential for ocean-based carbon capture and storage, and, if appropriate, further develop regulatory systems for ocean-based sequestration and marine engineering

3. Adaptation

Implement ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) strategies through integrated coastal and ocean management institutions at national, regional, and local levels to reduce vulnerability of coastal/ocean ecosystems and of human settlements, and to build the management capacity, preparedness, resilience, and adaptive capacities of coastal and island communities.

--Carry out adaptation measures through the integrated coastal and ocean management institutions created at national and local levels in all regions of the world since the 1992 Earth Summit, in close cooperation with disaster risk agencies and affected sectors and communities

--Apply ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation, especially regarding green infrastructure to provide natural system protection for defense against sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, storms, and flooding

--Establish and effectively manage coherent networks of marine protected areas in national and international waters to protect marine biodiversity and to enhance resilience of marine ecosystems to climate change, achieving the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Aichi Biodiversity Target of conserving at least 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020

--Promote and apply Blue Economy approaches with emphasis on low-carbon solutions and economic benefits to developing countries and SIDS (following SDG target 14.7)

4. Displacement

Develop and support measures to address the issues associated with the displacement of coastal and island populations as a result of climate change, which will necessitate improvement of international law, in terms of clarity of definitions, rights, and procedures for climate-induced refugees and migrants, including the development and implementation of appropriate financing measures.

The International Organization for Migrants (IOM) projects 200 million people will be displaced by 2050 due to overall environmental changes; a proactive strategy must be taken to reduce humanitarian, financial and other losses.

5. Financing

Adaptation and mitigation efforts in coastal and SIDS countries/communities should receive sufficient funding, through: 1) directing a significant portion of the current climate funds to coastal and SIDS

issues, and 2) developing supplementary financing to support adaptation and mitigation methods through innovative approaches and partnerships, entailing:

- Thorough examination of assessments of costs of adaptation, mitigation, and displacement
- Development of a financial tracking mechanism to report on financial flows to support climate change efforts related to oceans and coasts
- Earmarked funds in global public finance mechanisms to support adaptation and mitigation in coastal areas and SIDS
- Earmarked 10% of public and private investments in coastal infrastructure for coastal restoration

6. Capacity Development

Provide technical and financial assistance to SIDS, developing countries, and economies in transition to build capacity in the form of knowledge, tools, and scientific and political expertise to empower people to implement mitigation and adaptation measures, develop adaptive management capacity, early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction, and develop knowledge management mechanisms to share knowledge among all countries within and outside the UNFCCC frameworks.

- Promote the further enhancement of marine policy centers in developing countries and SIDS to build capacity in management and policy related to oceans and climate
- Strengthen the advancement of global marine observations, research, and related capacity development within the UNFCCC processes and beyond
- Support the preparation of the IPCC report on oceans and the cryosphere--to integrate and update the assessment of AR5 using scientific findings on the central role of oceans and climate and likely scenarios and consequences
- Include sustained ocean observation as part of national commitments, particularly within the framework of the UNFCCC and Agenda 2030/SDG 14 (target 14.a), in response to the call to increase knowledge to manage marine ecosystems sustainably, and understand the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification
- Enhance technical capacity development of vulnerable countries through the establishment of regional oceanographic centers to increase cooperation among States on ocean-climate research and multi-disciplinary observation (in accordance with SAMOA Pathway decision 58.f)
- Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels and the continued development of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (SDG 14.3)
- Expand public outreach and education efforts, following the Lima Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising (COP 20, 2014), to enhance individual capacity and public understanding of the ocean's role in planetary survival and in global and national well-being, of the risks posed to SIDS and coastal communities by climate change, and to catalyse public support for mitigation and adaptation responses