

Global Ocean Forum Rio+20 Voluntary Commitments



The Global Ocean Forum, first mobilized in 2001 to help governments place issues related to oceans, coasts, and small island developing States (SIDS) on the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) agenda, brings together ocean leaders from all sectors from over 100 countries to advance the global oceans agenda. The Global Ocean Forum promotes the implementation of international agreements related to oceans, coasts, and SIDS by assessing progress made, and identifying obstacles and opportunities for achieving sustainable development.

1. Ocean Watch: Assessment and Promotion of Progress in the Implementation of the 1992, 2002, and 2012 Global Commitments on Oceans, Coasts, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Partners: Global Ocean Forum, United Nations Development Program, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Ocean Policy Research Foundation, Japan

The continued assessment, policy dialogue, and reporting of the progress (or lack thereof) in meeting global commitments related to oceans, coasts, and SIDS will ensure continuous exchange of information, sharing of best practices, and provide the opportunity to develop novel approaches to fill gaps in past commitments, and to address new and emerging challenges. This serves to maintain a high public and political profile, and to mobilize the ocean community to achieve effective implementation of commitments. This builds on the work undertaken by the GOF and partners, in the report *Oceans at Rio+20: How Well Are We Doing in Meeting the Commitments from the 1992 Earth Summit and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development? Summary for Decision Makers* available at:

<http://www.globaloceans.org/sites/udel.edu.globaloceans/files/Rio20SummaryReport.pdf>

The systematic tracking of commitments will be undertaken by the Global Ocean Forum network of experts and collaborators through Global Ocean Conferences, dialogues, and policy analyses. These multi-stakeholder interfaces have proven to be a valuable tool for mobilizing action and highlighting the crucial role of the oceans in the lives of much of the world. Assessment of progress in the implementation will be patterned on the report cards developed prior to Rio+20, which helped to set the agenda of decision-makers in the Rio+20 process, and elevated oceans and coasts to one of the major themes of the Rio+20 Conference. These efforts, in addition to sustained discussions and information sharing through Oceans Days at related fora, including the CBD and the UNFCCC, will support the production of a report in 2017 (5 years after Rio+20) on *Oceans in the Post-Rio+20 World: How Well Are We Doing in Meeting the Commitments from the 1992 UNCED, 2002 WSSD, and the 2012 UNFCCC*.

These assessments will continue periodically every 5 years, serving to maintain a high public and political profile on the commitments made at the UNCED, WSSD, and Rio+20, to identify key gaps in implementation, and to identify pathways for assisting nations in filling implementation gaps.

2. Building Oceans Readiness: Capacity Development for Integrated Ocean Governance

Partners:

Global Ocean Forum, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO, World Ocean Network, Ocean Policy Research Foundation, Japan

Capacity development for integrated ocean governance is essential to achieve sustainable development of oceans and coasts including responses to address new challenges, climate change, and biodiversity loss, and provide sustainable ocean and coastal livelihoods. As the Global Ocean Forum Report *Oceans at Rio+20: Summary for Decision Makers* showed, the ambitious global agenda on capacity development has not been met. Funding is limited and there has been little collaboration and coordination of efforts among the many actors that assist in capacity development.

A global strategy for “oceans readiness,” mobilizing expertise and partnerships, will be developed to ensure that governments and institutions have the skills, knowledge, and capacity to develop Blue Economy frameworks, and to address challenges on oceans and coastal communities in a long-term, integrated manner. The focus of the initiative is to support capacity projects that are forward-thinking, comprehensive, and integrated across sectors. While various international fora have mechanisms for financing, these programs continue to be aimed at sector-specific projects that fail to integrate capacity building projects into long-term strategic development of institutions and capacity among high-level decision-makers and ocean leaders.

This initiative aims to build the skills and networks that are required for effective leadership, policy development, negotiation, stakeholder engagement, and communication. In addition, long-term capacity building will be supported through the introduction of effective governance, system knowledge, and strategic planning skills and frameworks. The combined focus at the individual and institutional level will ensure oceans remain on the top of the sustainable development agenda, and ensure effective long-term implementation. This will be achieved through training programs for high level, local, and next generation ocean leaders, along with public outreach. At the organizational level, the focus will be on strengthening institutional structures, processes, and resources through analysis, development and sharing of best practices. This commitment will be implemented in close cooperation with the Voluntary Commitment *Building Global Capacity for Marine Sciences, Observation, and Transfer of Marine Technology* led by IOC-UNESCO.

For further information on the Global Ocean Forum’s Rio+20 Voluntary Commitments, please contact: Dr. Biliiana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum at bcs@udel.edu, or at +1 302-831-8086.