**Recommendations from the Oceans Day at COP 21 Paris**

4 December 2015, 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM

Rio Conventions Pavilion, Climate Generations Area

UNFCCC COP 21 Paris

**Introduction**

Building on the three previous Oceans Days (Copenhagen-UNFCCC COP 15, 2009; Cancun-UNFCCC COP

16, 2010, and Durban-UNFCCC COP 17, 2011), and the outcome of the World Ocean Day (8 June 2015) organized by IOC/UNESCO and the Ocean and Climate Platform 2015 held at UNESCO in Paris, Oceans Day at COP 21, 4 December 2015, was a high-level event held to:

--Highlight the major climate and oceans issues, with emphasis on the impacts on the most vulnerable peoples and ecosystems, and suggest next steps, both within and outside the UNFCCC framework;

--Foster political leadership and move forward on the major climate and oceans solutions with the engagement of high-level leaders around the world;

--Catalyze and share solutions as part of the global portfolio of actions;

--Mobilize collaboration in the development of a five-year strategic plan on oceans and climate to guide policy and action.

The Oceans Day at COP 21 was organized by 46 partner organizations (including governments, intergovernmental/international organizations, non-governmental organizations/foundations, and academic/scientific institutions). The meeting featured over 30 high-level leaders, including heads of state, government ministers, heads of UN agencies, and heads of major civil society organizations. For more information on partners and speakers please see the program for the [Oceans Day at COP 21](https://globaloceanforumdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/final-oceans-day-at-cop-21-program-november-29-2015-email.pdf) at [globaloceanforum.com](file:///C:\Users\Erica\Documents\Erica's%20file\Delaware\GOF\Climate%20&%20Oceans\globaloceanforum.com). Over 400 participants, coming from countries around the world, took part in the event.

Topics presented at Oceans Day included: Addressing the Effects of Climate Change on Oceans and on Coastal and SIDS Populations: The Scientific Evidence, Scenarios and Choices for Decisionmakers; Adaptation and Financing for Adaptation; Mitigation and the Oceans; Financing, Capacity Development, Scientific Monitoring, and Public Education; and Bringing it All Together: A Five-Year Agenda for Action. The following summarizes major recommendations emanating from Oceans Day at COP 21.

**Since the first Oceans Day in Copenhagen, we have seen:**

* Irrefutable scientific evidence on the trajectory of climate change and its impacts, especially for the 70% of the world that is oceans and the 50 percent of the world’s population that lives in coastal areas and islands in 183 countries around the world who are at the front line of climate change;
* That the impacts are already happening now, not in some hypothetical future;
* That urgent action is needed now, and not tomorrow.

**What is needed from COP 21?**

--An ambitious legally binding agreement with stringent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions—this is essential to avoid disastrous consequences for the ocean and for coastal and island peoples.

--Urgent attention to and recognition of the central role of the oceans in regulating climate, and the fact that the ocean will not be able to perform these functions in the future if global warming continues unabated.

--Targeted financing to address climate change impacts in coastal communities and island states—for adaptation programs, for capacity development, for mitigation efforts to preserve coastal and ocean ecosystems, for addressing the problems of climate-induced population displacement with equity and justice.

**Major recommendations:**

**1.** **Adopt stringent reductions in CO2 emissions** to avoid disastrous consequences on coastal and island communities, marine ecosystems, and ocean chemistry, and limit warming to less than 2° C.

**2. Incorporate oceans into the text of the Paris agreement:**

* Accept the suggested revision in FCCC/ADP/2015/L.6/Rev.1/Add.1:

Preamble Pp 13: Also recognizing the importance of the conservation and enhancement, as appropriate, of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases referred to in Article 4, paragraph 1(d), of the Convention, **including biomass, forests and oceans as well as other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems,** including through internationally agreed approaches [such as REDD-plus and the joint mitigation and adaptation approach for the integral and sustainable management of forests], and of their non-carbon co-benefits,

* Alternatively, insert a new article on oceans:

Article 2 bis – 1 bis (After Article 2bis 1.) **Recognizing the importance of the oceans in the global climate system, all Parties shall give due consideration to the role and functions of oceans in planning and implementing measures for mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation including science, technology, finance and capacity-building.**

**3.** **Mitigation:** Further develop and apply mitigation measures using the oceans, including:

* Implementing “blue carbon” policies;
* Reducing CO2 emissions from ships;
* Developing ocean-based renewable energy;
* Considering ocean-based carbon capture and storage.

**4. Adaptation:** Implement ecosystem-based adaptation 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.

* Establish and effectively manage coherent networks of marine protected areas to protect marine biodiversity and to enhance resilience of marine ecosystems to climate change.
* Follow the global Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, taking into account the differential impacts of natural and human-induced disasters and climate change on small-scale fisheries.
* 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).

**5.** **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 definitions, rights and procedures for climate-induced refugees and migrants, including the development and implementation of financing measures

**6. Adaptation and mitigation efforts in coastal and island communities should receive sufficient funding, including through:**

* A thorough examination of assessments of the costs of adaptation and mitigation in coastal countries and in SIDS to inform planning and implementation of adaptation and mitigation programs;
* A financial tracking mechanism to examine and report on financial flows to support climate change responses in coastal and SIDS countries/communities;
* Earmarked funds in global public finance mechanisms to support adaptation and mitigation in coastal areas and SIDS.

**7.**  **Capacity Development:**

* Within UNFCCC frameworks on capacity-building, the SAMOA Pathway, and other relevant frameworks, enhance existing adaptive capacity, including traditional knowledge, technologies, and skills in developing countries and Small Island Developing States with the requisite balance of knowledge, tools, public support, scientific and political expertise, needed to implement mitigation and adaptation measures.
* Promote the enhancement of marine policy centers in developing countries and SIDS to build capacity in management and policy related to oceans and climate.

**8.**  **Strengthen the advancement of global marine observations, research, and related capacity development** within the UNFCCC processes and beyond:

* Support the preparation of a special IPCC report on Oceans--to integrate and update the assessment of AR5 using scientific findings on the central role of oceans and climate and likely scenarios and consequences.
* Sustained ocean observation should be included as part of national commitments, particularly within the framework of the UNFCCC and Agenda 2030/ SDG 14, 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 further development of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network.

**9. 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 catalyze public support for mitigation and adaptation responses.

----------------

For additional information, contact: Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain ([bilianacicin-sain@globaloceans.org](mailto:bilianacicin-sain@globaloceans.org)), Dr. Miriam Balgos ([miriambalgos@globaloceans.org](mailto:miriambalgos@globaloceans.org)), Global Ocean Forum and University of Delaware.