

Ocean Conservancy Statement at The UN Ocean Conference Preparatory Meeting

February 5, 2020

Ocean Conservancy would like to thank the co-facilitators, Palau and Denmark, as well as the Conference hosts Portugal and Kenya for their leadership on SDG14 and we welcome the opportunity to work together to advance ocean conservation priorities in the lead up to the June conference.

Ocean Conservancy would like to support the comments made by Ocean Unite on behalf of the Blue Call to Action, calling on governments, corporations and civil society to RISE UP, *during the super year for nature and the ocean*, to set bold, clear, and ambitious goals. If not now, when?

As has been repeatedly acknowledged, the health of the ocean is inextricably linked to action on climate change. We strongly believe this interlinkage must be reflected in the dialogues of the conference. The ocean climate connection could be included in an existing dialogue for example as a focus in Theme 8 (interlinkages between the SDGs) or by broadening Theme 3 on Ocean Acidification to include other impacts of greenhouse gas emissions on the ocean.

While research and science to spark innovation and understanding are critically needed, as was noted yesterday, the existing body of knowledge, from IPBES to IPCC Special Report and others, gives us plenty of direction for the decade of Ocean Science ahead. We hope the Conference dialogues will focus on actions and solutions, and commitments to achieving the SDGs, and include discussions of next steps for those targets maturing in 2020. Relatedly, theme 8 could consider not only interlinkages between the SDGs but also other global agreements and targets.

The upcoming ocean-climate dialogue in the UNFCCC, which the COP25 decision text mandated in December of last year, demonstrates the international community's desire to better integrate ocean issues in addressing the climate crisis. This dialogue is a productive first step towards advancing ocean-climate actions in the UNFCCC context, and we encourage countries to prioritize participation from their ocean and climate delegations. The timing of the dialogue is critical as it will almost coincide with the UN Ocean Conference, taking place during the SBSTA meeting in Bonn, Germany. Ocean Conservancy encourages countries to highlight the dialogue and ocean-climate actions during the Ocean Conference. Submissions from Parties on the dialogue—which could include submissions that make recommendations on the format and goals of the dialogue, that propose next steps that the Parties to the UNFCCC should consider, or that address important topics in the ocean-climate nexus—are due March 31st to the UNFCCC secretariat via the submissions portal.

We would also like to reiterate our support for the following actions, included in the Blue Call to Action, as outcomes of the Ocean Conference:

- First, the outcome document This would be an ideal place to underline that countries should, consistent with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement, come forward with more ambitious emissions reduction goals in nationally determined contributions in 2020 and

maximize sustainable ocean-based mitigation options (such as protection/restoration of blue carbon ecosystems, emissions reductions from ocean-based transport, and well-sited renewable ocean energy) in those contributions or their implementation.

- Next, as Ambassador Thomson stated, plastic pollution in the ocean can be addressed now. An estimated 40% of plastic is used just once and discarded. All non-essential single use plastics should be eliminated by 2025.
- Without action, the global production of plastic is expected to double in the next ten years. Plastic production must be reduced and since the vast majority of plastic in the ocean originates on land, we need increased investments to improve waste collection and recycling systems.
- Ghost fishing gear accounts for 70% of surface floating macro-plastics in the ocean by weight. Internationally recognized best practices for the management of fishing gear must be implemented, to achieve a net reduction of ghost gear – the most costly and dangerous type of marine debris – in our ocean.
- Finally, on a business-as-usual pathway, total shipping emissions that today are 2-3% of the global total could reach 18% by 2050.¹ In line with commitments already made by the IMO, we should target 100 per cent decarbonization of all shipping by 2035, and also immediately ban heavy fuel oil use in the Arctic, minimizing any undue impact on small-island developing states (SIDS) or least developed countries (LDCs).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today and the Ocean Conservancy looks forward to supporting a successful Ocean Conference.

¹ David S. Lee et al., Manchester Metropolitan University, Shipping and Aviation Emissions in the Context of a 2°C Emission Pathway. http://www.cate.mmu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Shipping_and_aviation_emissions_and_2_degrees_22032013.pdf