



Submission from the International Coastal and Ocean Organization (Secretariat of the Global Ocean Forum) on the Road Map for Global Climate Action

1 August 2016

Introduction

The International Coastal and Ocean Organization (Global Ocean Forum) welcomes, with much appreciation, the invitation by the High-Level Champions, H.E. Laurence Tubiana, French Ambassador for Climate Change, and H.E. Dr. Hakima El Haite, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Energy, Mines, Water, and the Environment, Morocco, to comment on the Road Map for Global Climate Action.

Following the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement in December 2015, the co-organizing partners of the Oceans Day at COP 21, are mobilizing the worldwide initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate and on the action steps needed to carry out the policy recommendations contained in the Strategic Action Plan on Oceans and Climate presented at the Oceans Day at COP 21. Here we provide our comments on the questions put forward by the two High-Level Champions. Further details about the initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate and its Oceans Day efforts can be found at the end of this response letter.

1. The Current Situation

First, we agree with the High-Level Champions that there is great need to do “more, faster and now” on pre-2020 action. The risks of delay for coastal and small island developing state (SIDS) populations are grave. The inclusion of oceans in the preamble of the Paris Agreement, as well as the emphasis on the need for “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels,” represents an important step in acknowledging that the current state of play requires a strong sense of urgency in order to hold warming to safe levels.

At COP 21, the worldwide initiative on Oceans and Climate stressed the central role of oceans in climate, and the imperative of “*adopting stringent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to avoid disastrous consequences on coastal and island communities, marine ecosystems, and ocean chemistry.*” The Road Map of the High-Level Champions agrees with this recommendation by calling for a sense of strong pre-2020 urgency. Early and ambitious mitigation which keeps warming below 1.5°C, as well as robust adaptation efforts, are essential to the livelihoods and survival of communities in 183 coastal and SIDS nations; therefore we strongly support the High-Level Champions’ emphasis on pre-2020 action.

2. The Role of the High-Level Champions

We support the Champions' intention to broaden adaptation efforts, with special emphasis on developing country Parties and non-Party stakeholders. The role of the High-Level Champions is to "facilitate the successful execution of existing efforts and the scaling-up and introduction of new or strengthened voluntary efforts, initiatives and coalitions." The stated intention to facilitate cooperation on initiatives between and among country Parties and non-Party stakeholders is consistent with the role described in decision 1/CP.21. The worldwide initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate welcomes opportunities for collaboration among all stakeholders; the initiative itself represents a collaboration of 46 state Parties and non-Party stakeholders.

With respect to adaptation, the initiative on Oceans and Climate's main recommendation is to "*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 build the management capacity, preparedness, resilience, and adaptive capacities of coastal and island communities and sectors.*" The Road Map put forth by the High-Level Champions appears to support this recommendation, by supporting increasing "action on the ground." We also welcome the emphasis on collaboration across levels and types of organizations.

The initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate emphasizes the importance of capacity building for SIDS and coastal populations, which represent a special case when it comes to adaptation. Many of these nations face the possibility of climate-induced population displacement, through slow-onset events such as sea level rise and saltwater intrusion in addition to increased likelihood of extreme weather events. Advanced preparation for these possibilities will be an important component of adaptation plans related to coastal and SIDS populations, and must be part of the considerations of the UNFCCC going forward. With respect to displacement, the initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate recommends that the international community "*develop and support measures to address the issues associated with the displacement of coastal and island populations as a result of climate change.*" A key role of the Champions should be to promote awareness of and collaboration on existing and future adaptation efforts, building on the momentum created by the Paris Agreement.

3. Transparency and Tracking

We agree that it is imperative that future efforts and coalitions communicate and share their results and progress in order to enhance the transparency and credibility of their commitments. Transparency of action can discourage double-counting of areas such as national greenhouse gas inventories. The worldwide initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate supports every effort to increase transparency of all initiatives/coalitions. As the initiative/coalition develops further, specific processes will be put in place to mobilize and track progress on the five-year Strategic Action Plan on Oceans and Climate. As well, the initiative on Oceans and Climate underlines that transparency and tracking are essential for the central area of climate finance. The initiative is working on a Financial Tracker, especially focused on tracking financing related to mitigation, adaptation, and capacity development related to oceans and coastal and island communities.

4. High-Level Event

We agree with the importance of high-level events in coordinating efforts of initiatives and coalitions. The high-level events that occur in conjunction with UNFCCC COP meetings help to facilitate increased engagement and enthusiasm from all stakeholders, especially in the case of voluntary efforts. The initiative on Oceans and Climate hosts a high-level event, Oceans Day, at the COP, with the intention of strengthening awareness, UNFCCC action, and voluntary efforts to protect the central role of oceans in climate and the wellbeing of island and coastal communities whose livelihoods depend upon a healthy ocean.

5. The role of the TEMS

The initiative on Oceans and Climate strongly supports the participation of technical experts in all aspects of mitigation, adaptation, financing, and capacity development efforts. Many technical experts around the world, especially from national and regional levels, are part of the initiative on Oceans and Climate, because the presentation of well-supported, science-based policy recommendations is essential to protecting ocean ecosystems and coastal and SIDS populations from the worst impacts of climate change. We agree that TEMs, and indeed all efforts to address climate change, should evolve over time and in the light of the Global Climate Action Agenda. These TEMs can be more solution-oriented by presenting ecosystem- and science-based examples of best practice and sharing them in capacity-building efforts with developing and SIDS parties.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Background on the mobilization of the worldwide initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate at the Oceans Day at COP 21

The worldwide initiative and coalition on Oceans and Climate, mobilized in the COP 21 process and building on past UNFCCC Oceans Days, responds to the aims and goals expressed in the Road Map for Global Climate Action, Message to Parties and Non-Party Stakeholders from the High-level Champions, H.E. Ms. Laurence Tubiana, French Ambassador for Climate Change and H.E. Ms. Hakima El Haite, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment of Morocco, in Charge of the Environment, May 2016. The effort is coordinated by the Global Ocean Forum/International Coastal and Ocean Organization.

COP 21

COP 21 in Paris saw unprecedented mobilization of the oceans community from around the world to articulate the central importance of oceans in the climate system and to underscore that coastal populations and SIDS will need enhanced capacity and financial resources to address the adverse impacts of climate change. Over 150 parties and organizations were mobilized (including governments, international organizations, NGOs, academia/science groups, and private sector), and over 40 ocean events were held to highlight the oceans and climate issues.

The high-level Oceans Day at COP 21 (held on December 4, 2015) brought together over 400 participants and featured heads of state (HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco and President H.E. Tommy Remengesau, Jr. of Palau), over 30 high-level government ministers from around the world, leaders of NGOs and technical experts. The Oceans Day at COP 21 lent political support to the adoption of the ambitious Paris Agreement and put forth an agenda for action for the next five years on oceans and climate. The Oceans Day at COP 21 stressed the need for recognizing 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.

Synopsis of Oceans Day at COP 21 Paris

46 Organizers

- *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* included:
 - *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
- *Non-governmental Organizations*: the EUCC, Forum do Mar of Brazil, Global Island Partnership, the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), the Institut Oceanographique of Monaco, IUCN, the Partnership for Climate, Fisheries, and Aquaculture, the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, the World Ocean Network, the World Ocean Observatory, the WWF, and Nausicaa
- *Academic/Scientific Institutions*: Center for Coastal Studies of Massachusetts, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique of France, Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, the Global Change Institute of Queensland, the Instituto Politecnico Nacional of Mexico, Monmouth University, Oceanario de Lisboa, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Turkish Marine Research Foundation, and Tara Expeditions

The Oceans Day at COP 21 built on past UNFCCC Oceans Day efforts

- Past Oceans Days efforts included: The Oceans Day at Copenhagen (2009), The Oceans Day at Cancún (2010), and The Oceans Day at Durban (2011)
- Past Oceans Days efforts were credited with raising awareness of the oceans and climate issues and especially advancing some issues: blue carbon, understanding of the impacts of sea level rise, and of ocean acidification

Notwithstanding the enhanced awareness of the ocean issues in the UNFCCC process achieved through past Oceans Days, in the run-up to COP 21, the broad initiative and coalition on oceans and climate decided that a long-term and constant effort in support of the ocean and climate agenda was needed, and that a policy brief on oceans and climate, defining the issues and developing a draft strategic action plan on oceans and climate, should be developed.

Extensive preparatory work on an action strategy on oceans and climate was then mobilized, through an International Working Group on Oceans and Climate with 36 experts from around the world

- The policy brief, *Strategic Action on Oceans and Climate 2016 to 2021: Policy Recommendations on Oceans and Climate* was prepared, focusing on 5 major issues: the central role of oceans in climate, mitigation, adaptation, financing, and capacity development. For each issue, the following were examined:
 - the current status of the issue (and, as relevant, the science related to the issue)
 - the current state of play of the issue within the UNFCCC
 - the opportunities and pathways that may be available within the UNFCCC to advance the issue in the next five years
 - the opportunities and pathways that may be available outside of the UNFCCC to advance the issue
 - financial considerations regarding each issue

The Oceans Day at COP 21, convened on December 4, 2015, with 400 participants from all regions:

- Highlighted the major climate and oceans issues, with emphasis on the impacts on the most vulnerable peoples and ecosystems, and suggested next steps, both within and outside the UNFCCC framework
- Engaged political leaders to move forward on the major climate and oceans issues and solutions
- Mobilized collaboration in the development of a five-year strategic plan on oceans and climate to guide policy and action

Major Recommendations Presented at Oceans Day COP 21

1. *The oceans play a central role in climate and should receive greater attention in the UNFCCC processes*: Oceans and climate are intertwined, with oceans driving climate and climate change affecting ocean health and coastal and island peoples.
 - a. Oceans cycle over 93% of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, produce 50% of the oxygen we breathe, store 50% of all naturally sequestered carbon, and absorb 90% of the heat added to the global system in the past 200 years.

- b. Oceans, seas, and coastal areas are experiencing an increased frequency and intensity of climate extremes, including stronger hurricanes, typhoons, and cyclones. Changes in ocean chemistry and temperature are causing ocean acidification, sea level rise, and fluctuations in ocean circulation and salinity.
 - c. Coastal populations and small island developing States (SIDS) in 183 countries are significantly affected by climate change and typically have insufficient capacity and resources to address the adverse impacts of climate change. Yet, oceans and coasts have generally featured little in the UNFCCC climate negotiations.
2. *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, and considering ocean-based carbon capture and storage.
- a. Conserve and sustainably manage 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
 - i. Account for these ecosystems in the national reports to the UNFCCC, the NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions)
 - b. Further accelerate progress in addressing air emissions from ships
 - c. Sustainably develop ocean-based renewable energy
 - d. Consider potential for ocean-based carbon capture and storage with appropriate regulatory measures
2. *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 build the management capacity, preparedness, resilience, and adaptive capacities of coastal and island communities
- a. Adaptation measures should be carried out through the integrated coastal and ocean management institutions and apply ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation
 - b. Establish and effectively manage coherent networks of marine protected areas to protect marine biodiversity and to enhance resilience of marine ecosystems to climate change
 - c. 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
 - d. 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)
3. *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 definitions, rights and procedures for climate-induced refugees and migrants, including the development and implementation of financing measures.
- a. Current and Projected Scope of Climate-induced Displacement: Estimates from various organizations of the number of refugees that could be displaced within the century range from 50 million to 1 billion. The International Organization for Migrants (IOM) projects 200 million will be displaced by 2050 due to overall environmental changes.
4. *Financing*: Adaptation and mitigation efforts in coastal and SIDS countries /communities, and the issues of population displacement, should receive sufficient funding, through:
- a. Thorough examination of assessments of costs of adaptation, mitigation, and displacement (existing assessments inadequate, for example, do not account for ecosystem services)
 - b. Development of a financial tracking mechanism to report on financial flows to support climate change efforts related to oceans and coasts and SIDS
 - c. Earmarked funds in global public finance mechanisms to support adaptation and mitigation in coastal areas and SIDS
 - d. Earmarked private sector investments (e.g., work with the private sector to earmark 10% of investment in “gray” coastal infrastructure for coastal habitat protection and restoration)

5. *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 implement mitigation and adaptation measures, develop adaptive management capacity, early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction, and to develop knowledge management mechanisms to share knowledge among all countries within and outside the UNFCCC frameworks.
- a. 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
 - b. Strengthen the advancement of global marine observations, research, and related capacity development within the UNFCCC processes and beyond
 - c. Support the preparation of the 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
 - d. 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
 - e. 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)
 - 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.
 - g. 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.

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