

2026 OCEAN AND CLIMATE CHANGE DIALOGUE

Plenary statement submitted by Conservation International

30 June 2026

Conservation International (CI) thanks the co-facilitators for their leadership in this year's Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue and for the opportunity for Parties and observers to submit written plenary statements. CI's statement focuses on the potential of coastal Nature-based Solutions (NbS),ⁱ including the conservation and restoration of blue carbon habitats, to support cross cutting objectives of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity protection, and opportunities to strengthen integration of ocean-based climate actions under the UNFCCC.

Regarding Topic 1: Ocean-based priorities in the Nationally Determined Contributions

Given their adaptation value, high biodiversity and carbon stored in coastal blue carbon ecosystems — specifically mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes — many countries have already integrated blue carbon commitments in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans, and other national policies. Building on this existing momentum, Parties are encouraged to:

- **Elevate ambition for blue carbon ecosystems in NDCs:** Even more ambition can be unlocked for coastal blue carbon ecosystems in the coming years. The range of entry points for including coastal ecosystems in NDCs, and for strengthening existing inclusion, enables Parties, despite varying degrees of readiness, to develop strong commitments —from addressing data gaps and capacity needs, to the inclusion of blue carbon habitats in GHG inventories. *Relevant resource:* [Blue Carbon and Nationally Determined Contributions: Guidelines on Enhanced Action: Second Edition](#)
- **Integrate seagrass habitats into NDCs:** The conservation, restoration and management of seagrass meadows can lead to measurable climate mitigation benefits, as well as benefits for biodiversity and adaptation, including improved water quality, reduced erosion and wave impact reduction. *Relevant resource:* [Seagrass as a Climate Solution: Pathways for Inclusion in NDCs](#)
- **Endorse the Mangrove Breakthrough:** Parties are encouraged to endorse the Mangrove Breakthrough (MB), a global movement to finance mangrove conservation. The MB includes an NDC Taskforce that supports countries in developing mangrove-positive NDC commitments and attracting finance to support implementation. *Relevant resource:* [Mangrove Breakthrough NDC Taskforce Policy Guidance](#)
- **Consider green-gray infrastructure solutions for enhanced coastal resilience:** Integrating green-gray infrastructure (GGI) commitments into NDCs and NAPs helps countries meet adaptation and resilience goals by combining ecosystem restoration and other nature-based solutions with engineered 'gray' infrastructure, delivering co-benefits (e.g., habitat, water quality) and strengthening community resilience. *Relevant resources:* [Guidance for Policymakers: Enhancing Resilience with Green-Gray Infrastructure](#), [Guidance for Including Coastal Green-Gray Infrastructure in NDCs](#)

Regarding Topic 2: Means of Implementation

Countries are increasingly calling for more formalized and systematic integration of ocean issues within the UNFCCC, reflecting the growing recognition of the ocean and coasts as central to climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. To support this, Parties are encouraged to:

- **Establish a time-bound (e.g., three to five-year) roadmap for the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue** that outlines a strategic progression of topics and specifies how the Dialogue will support negotiation outcomes for the ocean and coastal ecosystems, providing continuity, structure, and strategic direction. It would enable the Dialogue to move beyond exchange toward implementation-oriented outcomes related to ambition, adaptation and finance, aligned with the Paris Agreement ambition cycle (e.g., the second Global Stocktake and

next round of NDCs). Continued calls for an Ocean-Climate Dialogue roadmap should also ensure it would identify responsible entities (e.g., UNFCCC Secretariat) and include an assessment of Dialogue progress.

Additionally, messages from this year's Dialogue make it clear that there remains an urgent need for **scaled-up, predictable, and accessible finance to implement ocean-based commitments and solutions**, with the 2026 SCF Forum on Financing Climate Action in Water and the Oceans as a pivotal moment later this year for discussion and action.

- The **2026 SCF Forum** should build upon the Dialogue's discussions to showcase and enhance capacity for the diverse suite of financing solutions for coastal nature-based solutions, including blue carbon habitats, coral reefs, and hybrid green-gray infrastructure solutions, while also exploring new pathways to fill remaining funding gaps.
- **A valuable next step would be to appoint an SCF Ocean Focal Point** to lead consideration of ocean-climate finance gaps and opportunities across SCF processes and activities. This could include future SCF Biennial Assessments and progress reports on the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance. This Focal Point could also attend future annual Ocean and Climate Change Dialogues.
- *Relevant resource:* [Conservation International's submission of views to the 2026 SCF Forum](#).

Regarding Topic 3: Ocean-climate-biodiversity synergies and international cooperation

The science is clear: climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation are global crises that require urgent responses and cannot be tackled in isolation. Oceans absorb 25% of carbon emissions, cover 70% of our planet, and are home to a vast amount of the world's biological diversity.² Therefore, climate change mitigation under the UNFCCC and biodiversity conservation under the UNCBD are both linked by ocean health.

- In a triple COP year, the UNFCCC should signal strong political support for enhanced policy coherence across the Rio Conventions and prepare to deliver a COP31 decision that provides a clear and actionable pathway for enhanced collaboration. These efforts must highlight ocean and coastal ecosystems within efforts related to Rio Convention synergies.
- We encourage Parties to advance synergetic action on nature, including the ocean, through integrated landscape and seascape approaches to conserve, restore, and sustainably manage the places most important for delivering action on climate, biodiversity, and land goals.

Finally, CI encourages Parties to join and engage with the Friends of the Ocean and Climate (FOOC) group, which serves as an important coordination platform for Parties to mainstream ocean priorities across UNFCCC agenda items, mirroring the effective coalition-building approach of other negotiating groups (e.g., the Mountain Group, Coalition for Rainforest Nations). Parties are encouraged to join the FOOC to support ongoing ocean-climate coordination and action under the UNFCCC, including at COP31.

¹ Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience, and biodiversity benefits. (UNEA, March 2022 [UNEP/EA.5/Res.5])