

# **UNFCCC COP 26**

## **Outcome Document**

### **Action Event: “Ocean & Coastal Zones”**

Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

Thursday, 5 November 2021

14:30 – 17:15 GMT

Organised by the MP-GCA on Ocean and Coastal Zones, the Ocean & Climate Platform, IOC-UNESCO, IUCN, and the High-Level Climate Champions

# MPGCA “Ocean & Coastal Zones”: A healthy and productive ocean for a resilient, nature-positive and net-zero future

## SECTION 1 - ACTION EVENT

### Key Messages:

*The ocean is at the crossroads of all the major challenges facing humanity today - climate change, biodiversity loss, energy transition, food security, transport, livelihood and human health - and is therefore key to the sustainable and equitable world we must build. A healthy and productive ocean is a powerful source of solutions to tackle climate change while providing considerable benefits to local populations. In that regard, the MP-GCA Ocean Action Day Event set out to showcase existing ocean-based climate solutions, promoting ocean action as part of our climate change response and raising climate ambition for the ocean.*

1. A healthy and biodiverse ocean provides abundant and nutritious food, ensures wellbeing, and preserves cultural heritage, and supports sustainable livelihoods of billions of people – as well as mitigation and adaptation solutions for climate change. These solutions must therefore be more widely reflected in national climate commitments, strategies and implementation plans, particularly in NDCs and NAPs under the UNFCCC. In that regard, coastal and marine Nature-based Solutions have a major role to play.
2. Creating and implementing the enabling conditions for action will be essential to enhance sustainable, inclusive, ocean-based climate solutions (including NbS, sustainable seafood, ocean renewable energy and decarbonised shipping) moving forward. Science and finance are two key enablers, and both scientific knowledge (including traditional and local knowledge) and financial flows must substantially increase to, more adequately and equitably, boost and inform ocean action, including through adequate policies and management frameworks.
3. Putting sustainability and equity at the heart of ocean management is essential for protection, production and prosperity that benefits both nature and people. As a result, it is necessary to further develop inclusive, science-based ocean management to tap into the full potential of ocean solutions, while better protecting the ocean and restoring its health and productivity.

## **Outcomes:**

### **1. *Endorse and drive action aligned with the Marrakech Partnership Climate Action Pathways***

The MP-GCA Ocean Action Day successfully convened a wide range of actors working towards a healthy and productive ocean for a resilient and net-zero future. Building on the Ocean Action Pathway, the event acted as a catalyst to increase action and collaboration between governments and other key stakeholders across sectors (e.g. scientists, businesses, NGO leaders, UN organisations, local communities) to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. Participants put forward ocean-based climate solutions and opportunities to achieve a system transformation for the ocean and coastal zones by 2050, thereby setting a common narrative on solutions. It relied on the vision of the Ocean Action Pathway to showcase how a sustainably and equitably well-managed ocean thrives to support Nature and People. Together with the Climate Champions, the MP-GCA Ocean & Coastal Zones released the Ocean For Climate Declaration, which was signed by 120 organisations. It was the first declaration to focus on ocean-based climate solutions (within the scope of the UNFCCC) to rally support from NGOs, companies, scientific institutions and international organisations. The Declaration was further endorsed by Fiji during the Ocean Action Day.

### **2. *Generate Convergence around campaigns, Race to Zero, Race to Resilience, Race to Zero breakthroughs***

The Ocean Action Day provided an avenue for stakeholders from very diverse sectors and backgrounds to confront their perspectives, and share their experiences, actions and strategies to drive sustainable systems change in their respective fields. In that regard, participants have highlighted their contribution to the goals of the *Race to Zero* and *Race to Resilience*, and announced new commitments to further ambition. On the civil society front, for instance, Lloyd's Register described how it has been contributing to fully decarbonize the activities of the shipping sector by 2050. On the government side, Costa Rica underlined that it would protect 30% of the ocean under its national jurisdiction by 2022. The event provided an opportunity to present initiatives that are endorsed by either one of the two Races, such as the Global Mangrove Alliance and the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance. Participants considered synergies between the different campaigns, underlying potential trade-offs between solutions to overcome existing tensions (e.g. offshore wind farms positively contribute to the *Race to Zero* but can negatively impact the local marine environment and other ocean users).

### **3. *Strengthen the quality and depth of dialogues and collective action between non-Party stakeholders and governments***

The Ocean Action Day gathered more than 35 experts from governments, UN entities, companies, NGOs, scientific institutes and local communities. Two roundtables gathered non-

Party stakeholders and government representatives to discuss their respective expectations and aspirations to strengthen collective ocean-climate action. For instance, Blue Ventures and the Stockholm Resilience Centre both called on present government representatives to better integrate human rights and equitable access to ocean resources in their strategies. The same goes for companies with for example, Lloyd's Register urging governments to support the shipping sector's energy transition by implementing new regulations. Non-party stakeholders (NPS) succeeded in uniting their voices to deliver a common and clear message to countries. Governments, such as the Maldives, acknowledged the crucial role played by NPS in supporting state-led initiatives and scaling-up ocean action (e.g. to include ocean-related measures in updated NDCs).

Concrete examples of partnerships between countries and NPS to scale-up ocean-based climate solutions were presented, including to better include the ocean in NDCs (e.g. Seychelles, Costa Rica). The Ocean Action Day further provided a platform to voice the need for a recurrent ocean-climate dialogue under the UNFCCC - a call that was heard and included in the Glasgow Pact.

#### *4. Demonstrate action and evidence of transformation across diverse parties of the NPS community*

NGOs, entrepreneurs, CEOs and leaders of business coalitions, described their actions and strategies to achieve transformal change and support the transition towards a resilient and net-zero future in line with the Paris Agreement. For instance, Emma Stewart, Netflix's Sustainability Officer, presented the company's goal to become a net zero GHG emitter by December 2022, and announced the launch of the Blue Carbon Buyers Alliance to support and finance blue carbon credits. Meanwhile, the Safe Seaweed Coalition and Cascadia Seaweed underscored the environmental, nutritional, and investment value of algae during the Pitch Segment of Ocean Action Day. All participants recognised that only a healthy and productive ocean can help us achieve our climate mitigation and adaptation goals. Participants also committed to implementing the enabling conditions for action, and urged other stakeholders to join them in deploying the necessary resources for increased action and ambition. The Global Mangrove Alliance, an international initiative coordinated by Conservation International, IUCN, TNC, Wetlands International and WWF, showcased how its 27 members work together to halt mangrove losses and increase mangrove cover. The Sasakawa Peace Foundation's OPRI, which started a social experiment of blue carbon credit in Japan, presented the objectives and activities undertaken for this project (i.e. quantification of the carbon absorbed by seaweed ecosystems, creation of innovative carbon credit schemes).

## SECTION 2 - PROGRESS AND OUTLOOK

### Overview of progress in 2021

Despite the global pandemic of Covid-19, ocean-related issues maintained a high level of political momentum throughout 2021, which was initiated by the Chilean Presidency of the Blue COP25. The first Ocean-Climate Dialogue was held by the Chair of SBSTA in December 2020 and laid the ground for increased action on the ocean-climate nexus under the UNFCCC and across the UN fora. In January 2021, the official announcement of the High Ambition Coalition with its “30x30 initiative”, endorsed by more than 50 States, triggered a positive dynamic. At the IUCN World Conservation Congress, for the first time a High-Level Session was dedicated to the Ocean while France announced the organization of a One Ocean Summit in February 2022.

Additionally, Parties to the UNFCCC have better integrated ocean-based measures for adaptation and mitigation into their new or updated NDCs. Experts from civil society deployed considerable efforts to assist countries in building the ocean-climate narrative (i.e. Friends of Ocean & Climate) to ensure a strong political outcome at COP26.

Under the MP-GCA Ocean & Coastal Zones, the ocean community managed to come together and define a common vision (i.e. Ocean Action Pathway; Ocean For Climate Declaration). The strong commitment of the Climate Champions, and the appointment of an Ocean lead within their team, allowed for a greater reach beyond the existing ocean community.

### Section 3 – Action during 2022

In 2022, the MP-GCA Ocean & Coastal Zones will aim to build on the progress achieved at COP26 and move from commitments to action.

**1 - Strengthen collaboration among the MP-GCA Ocean & Coastal Zones:** to ensure greater collaboration from the Ocean community, a more bottom-up approach needs to be developed. Between December 2021 and January 2022, consultations of the MP-GCA partners will be set up by the focal points and Champions team to assess the needs and expectations of the community. Throughout 2022, a common strategy will be defined, and a roadmap adopted, in line with the Improved Marrakech Partnership (2021-2025). Improving diversity and inclusion is needed, especially to ensure geographic representativity, local and indigenous communities and small-scale actors. In order to mobilize the group and its expertise along the year, the launch of thematic working groups under the MP-GCA will be explored.

**2- Build on the Solutions narrative and scale-up action:** continue to track progress on the vision defined by the Ocean Action Pathway and the Ocean For Climate Declaration. Identify further breakthroughs and ensure that ocean-based sectors are committing to the Race-to-Zero and Race-to-Resilience. A particular focus will be made on nature-based solutions for resilient communities, including the resulting positive and negative consequences.

**3- Preparing for COP 27 in Egypt:** The MP-GCA Ocean shall develop its narrative around coastal adaptation and the blue economy to align with the priorities identified for COP27. In the run-up to COP27, the Ocean community will ensure its greater participation to the MP-GCA activities, including the regional climate weeks, and align its positions to feed in the work of the SBSTA Ocean-Climate Dialogue (June 2022) and other key international events (CBD, UN Ocean Conference, Stockholm+50).