

UNFCCC SBSTA 62 Ocean & Climate Change Dialogue - Video Message by Ambassador Peter Thomson, UNSG's Special Envoy for the Ocean, 17 June 2025

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Warm greetings and thank you for the welcome opportunity of addressing this year's Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue.

Thanks in particular are due to Ambassador Carlos Cozende and Ulrik Lenaerts for taking on the responsibilities of co-facilitating the 2025 Dialogue at SBSTA 62. These are heavy responsibilities, for successive Dialogues have established them as a vital platform for Parties and observers to better understand and collectively advance ocean-based climate action. And this is as it should be on a planet whose climate is dominated by the effects of sun and sea.

Everything is connected, so we must bring seamless thought and action to our global endeavours to overcome the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The ocean is the blue thread of connectivity. Covering 71% of our planet's surface, and providing well over 90% of its living space, it's hardly surprising the ocean is such a dominant consideration. But terrestrial mammals like us seem to have had trouble grasping that fact in the past.

Thankfully, through the now well-established annual Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, we have a mechanism for incorporating the ocean into our deliberations on climate change. May we never again overlook the reality that protecting the ocean is essential for climate stability, for planetary biodiversity, and for the well-being of humanity.

I'm sure you'll spend the next two days working to fortify the connection between the 3rd UN Ocean Conference held in Nice last week, and the UNFCCC COP30 being held in Belém later this year. At UNOC3, world leaders issued a united, urgent call for full implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and called for greater effort to limit global temperature rise to the 1.5°C level required to secure a healthy, resilient, and productive ocean.

UNOC3 heard many voices raised in support of the work of the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, with explicit emphasis on the three core topics of the 2025 Dialogue: namely the ocean in NDCs, the ocean under the Global Goal on Adaptation, and ocean–climate–biodiversity synergies.

It is sobering to reflect that it has been ten years since the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement. Around the world, with every passing year we witness a growing sense of alarm, for the first Global Stocktake was unequivocal in demonstrating we are not on track to meet the 1.5°C target. Now that the Paris Rulebook has been finalised and the first cycle of the Agreement has been completed, it is incumbent upon us to enter a new, decisive phase of implementation and accountability. I trust the spirit of your discussions in Bonn over the next two days will reflect that alarm.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to emphasise the importance of ocean-based measures being fully integrated into new NDCs. We know the enormous social and economic benefits of including the ocean in climate planning—and we know that doing so can help us reach the long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement. I therefore urge all Parties to include ocean-based mitigation and adaptation targets in their new NDCs.

I also wish to stress that the ocean must flow into the Global Goal on Adaptation. Nature-based solutions, like mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs, are frontline defences for millions of coastal lives and livelihoods. They must be valued, scaled, and financed.

Without Means of Implementation, particularly in relation to finance and science, we will be lost at sea. Thus, I am reassured to learn these will be cross-cutting themes of this year's Dialogue. Ocean action remains one of the least funded areas of the climate agenda. That must change. We must expand blue finance, invest in research, and ensure that developing countries, especially SIDS and LDCs, have equitable access to data, tools, and technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will close these remarks by reinforcing my earlier point on the synergies of ocean, climate, and biodiversity. UNOC3 reaffirmed the importance of coordinated action across the Rio Conventions, the BBNJ Agreement, and the Global Biodiversity Framework, and indeed, it would be a perpetuation of human folly were we to continue addressing these crises in silos.

As I said in my closing address at UNOC3 last Friday, the ocean's voice must be central to any rational discussions on the measures of mitigation and adaptation required to provide humanity with a resilient future. That means the ocean's voice being heard loud and clear at UNFCCC COP30 in Belém this year, with a bold call for COP31 to be a Blue Conference.

I wish you well in your deliberations in Bonn and thank you for your attention.
