WWF Submission following the 2026 Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue (SB64)

June 2026

Key recommendations:

1. **Shift from ocean ambition to ocean implementation**
2. **Make the Dialogue the bridge across UNFCCC processes**
3. **Strengthen coherence across global agreements**
4. **Unlock finance for implementation**
5. **Give the Dialogue a long-term strategic direction**

WWF welcomes the opportunity to provide written input following the 2026 Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue and thanks the Co-Facilitators for their leadership in convening this important mandated event.

Since its establishment by COP25 and subsequent strengthening at COP26, the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue has become the UNFCCC's principal space for advancing ocean-climate action. It has demonstrated that the ocean is not simply impacted by climate change, but an essential part of the solution. As the climate regime increasingly shifts from negotiations towards implementation, the Dialogue has an opportunity to evolve alongside it – helping to ensure that practical experience, scientific evidence and country needs are reflected across the wider UNFCCC process.

The urgency for strengthening the Dialogue has never been greater. Science is clear: as the world approaches 1.5°C of warming, with a growing certainty of overshoot, the ocean is experiencing intensifying marine heatwaves, sea-level rise, and biodiversity loss, leading to increasing risks of crossing critical ocean tipping points. These changes threaten food security, livelihoods, coastal resilience and the ocean's capacity to regulate our climate. Every fraction of a degree matters, making it essential that the Dialogue supports rapid and ambitious emissions reductions, ensures that ocean-climate action remains firmly grounded in the best available science, and continues its efforts to accelerate implementation of ocean-based climate solutions for the benefit of people, nature and the ocean.

WWF therefore encourages Parties and the Co-Facilitators to build on the momentum from SB64 by focusing on five priorities:

1. Shift from ocean ambition to ocean implementation

Ocean-climate action is now well represented within Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The priority is no longer to encourage countries to include the ocean, but to support delivery of those commitments. The Dialogue should increasingly focus on implementation barriers, enabling conditions, finance needs and lessons learned from delivery.

2. Make the Dialogue the bridge to and across UNFCCC processes

The Dialogue's value lies in accelerating implementation across the Convention. It should serve as the bridge between ocean science, practical experience, and the wider UNFCCC architecture, systematically informing mitigation, adaptation, finance, transparency and just transition processes, work streams and negotiations. Future Dialogues should strengthen engagement with agenda items, constituted bodies, work programmes, and Presidency initiatives so that ocean-climate action becomes embedded throughout the Convention.

3. Strengthen coherence across global agreements

Ocean-climate action is most effective when implemented through coherent legislation, strategies and policies across climate, biodiversity and ocean frameworks. The Dialogue should promote stronger alignment between NDCs, NBSAPs and long-term emission reduction strategies, while fostering practical cooperation and information exchange between the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the BBNJ Agreement to accelerate implementation and avoid fragmented approaches.

4. Unlock finance for implementation

Parties should improve access to predictable, grant-based and concessional finance, particularly for coastal developing countries and Small Island Developing States, while strengthening country ownership and locally-led implementation. Greater coherence across existing funding mechanisms, improved visibility and tracking of ocean-climate finance, as well as stronger alignment between national priorities and available financial instruments will be essential to accelerate delivery. In this regard, the 2026 Standing Committee on Finance Forum presents an important opportunity to identify practical solutions to improve the accessibility, effectiveness and coordination of ocean-climate finance.

5. Give the Dialogue a long-term strategic direction

The Dialogue has matured into an established annual event under the UNFCCC SBSTA meeting and now requires a clearer long-term strategic direction. WWF supports the development of a structured multi-year work plan, aligned with the Paris Agreement ambition cycle, to strengthen continuity between Dialogues, embed institutional learning, and ensure that recommendations are systematically reflected in the Global Stocktake, other relevant UNFCCC processes, and Presidency initiatives. This should be complemented by a five-year review mandated by COP31 to assess the effectiveness of the Dialogue, identify opportunities for improvement, and inform future strategic priorities.

From Dialogue to Delivery

Encouragingly, discussions throughout the Dialogue reflected a clear shift from ambition towards implementation. More than ninety percent of coastal and island countries now include ocean-based measures within their NDCs. The challenge is therefore increasingly one of delivery. Existing initiatives, including the Blue NDC Challenge and its Implementation Taskforce, provide important opportunities to accelerate implementation and should be further supported through finance, technical cooperation and knowledge exchange.

At the same time, the Dialogue reinforced that ocean action cannot remain isolated within a single agenda item. Delivering effective ocean-climate action requires stronger integration across adaptation, mitigation, finance, transparency and just transition processes, while strengthening coherence between climate, biodiversity and ocean governance. National implementation should likewise promote greater alignment between NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs and long-term emission reduction strategies.

Finance remains one of the principal barriers to implementation. WWF therefore welcomes the Standing Committee on Finance's forthcoming Forum on Financing Climate Action in Water Systems and the Ocean and encourages Parties to ensure that its outcomes improve the accessibility, coherence and visibility of ocean-climate finance, particularly for locally led action and vulnerable coastal communities.

Finally, WWF believes the Dialogue itself should continue to evolve. Establishing a structured multi-year work plan would strengthen its contribution to the Paris Agreement ambition cycle, improve continuity between annual Dialogues, and ensure that the recommendations emerging from this process are systematically reflected across relevant UNFCCC work programmes, Presidency initiatives and preparations for the second Global Stocktake.

WWF remains committed to working alongside Parties, observers and the Presidencies to translate growing political recognition of the ocean into meaningful implementation for climate, people and nature.

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