

# Brussels Declaration “The Ocean and Climate Change”

19 February 2019

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*We, the undersigned, present at the High-level Conference on Oceans and Climate Change held in Brussels on 19 February 2019:*

## ***Sustainable Development, climate change and ocean biodiversity***

Reaffirm the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15 and 16, recognizing their interconnectivity, as well as in “Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action”; and in this respect commend the work of the UN Special Envoy for the Oceans and welcome the offer of Portugal and Kenya to host the 2020 United Nations Oceans Conference;

Recall the commitments made in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular with regards to oceans and marine ecosystems, those made during the Our Ocean Conferences, as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Targets;

Recall that the “Because the Ocean Declaration” encourages Parties to the Paris Agreement “to consider submitting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that promote, as appropriate, ambitious climate action in order to minimize the adverse effects of climate change in the ocean and to contribute to its protection and conservation”.

Underline the critical importance of science based policy making and call on all countries to engage with and support the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

Recognize the important role of cooperative action at the regional level, in regional fisheries management organisations, regional sea conventions and action plans and other relevant fora, to reinforce knowledge, share capacities and foster cooperation on effective marine research, innovation and environmental protection policies and management to ensure a long term sustainable utilisation of marine resources and increased food security, and in this respect take note of the actions included in the European Union’s International Ocean Governance Communication;

Welcome the scientific information in the reports of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessing the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services it provides as a contribution to making informed policy choices;

Express our support to enhance ocean, climate, and biodiversity related actions within multilateral fora and conventions such as UNEP, UNCLOS, the UNCBD, the World Heritage Convention, the Ramsar convention and other global and regional fora; and in particular note the UNEP Marine and Coastal Strategy;

Commit to continue engaging constructively in developing by 2020 an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, recognizing that the conservation and sustainable use of ocean biodiversity require tools, in particular area-based management tools, to improve its resilience in respect of climate change . and that combating the adverse impacts of climate change must be in accordance with this future instrument.

Emphasize the need to identify opportunities in the UNFCCC context to help Parties to protect the ocean from the adverse effects of climate change. In this regard, call upon all UNFCCC Parties to engage in initiatives such as the Oceans Pathway Partnership, launched at COP23, the Because the Ocean and Ocean Acidification Alliance;

Call on the international community to duly examine the IPCC *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* (IPCC SROCC) to be released in September 2019 and in particular to consider current and future sea level rise risks, resulting in biophysical, ecological, economic, political, cultural, social and psychological impacts, displacement and resettlement, as well as the effects of climate change on marine

ecosystems and the livelihoods of dependent communities, and the implications of different mitigation measures.

Urge all countries, non-state actors and international organizations, to consider pathways to resilience and sustainable development, adaptation options and limits to be identified in the IPCC SROCC;

Express our deep concern over the findings in the IPCC *Special Report on Global Warming of 1,5°C (SR1.5)* , unequivocally confirming the negative impacts of climate change, including on the ocean.

Stress that the IPCC SR 1.5 concludes that limiting warming, to 1,5 °C above preindustrial levels, would considerably reduce these impacts, but requires immediate global action in all sectors, so as to reduce global net anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by about 45% by 2030 compared to 2010 and achieve global net-zero emissions around 2050;<sup>1</sup>

Are deeply concerned with the finding of the IPCC SR1.5 that current NDCs are not sufficient to meet the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement.

Encourage all parties, as appropriate, to include actions related to the ocean, including coastal and marine nature-based solutions, when preparing and implementing their NDCs, their adaptation communications and their long term low emissions development strategies.

Endorse the *Talanoa Call for Action* presented at COP24 and call on all Parties to the Paris Agreement to consider the outcome, inputs and outputs of the Talanoa Dialogue in preparing their NDCs and long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies.

Look forward to the UN Climate Summit in 2019 as an important opportunity to raise ambition for achieving the Paris Agreement goals. Call on all Parties to the Agreement to present at the Summit their progress and future ambition.

Urge all Parties to the Paris Agreement to reflect on their levels of ambition and start, as soon as possible, preparations of their NDCs to be communicated by 2020 that are in line with the agreement and its goals and encourage all parties to elaborate at the Summit on possibilities for enhanced NDCs by 2020. This in line with long term low emission strategies consistent with a trajectory towards carbon neutrality, and taking duly into account the outcome, inputs and outputs of the Talanoa Dialogue, including, in particular, the IPCC SR1.5.

Urge all Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to agree on an ambitious post 2020 Biodiversity Framework at CBD COP 15 in Beijing;

Encourage States to invest in ocean and climate research, including on underlying processes and options at the regional and local level, for delivering the best science for preserving a healthy and resilient ocean in a globally changing environment and supporting the implementation of international policies.

### ***Renewable ocean energy and marine ecosystems***

Recommend to facilitate the development of cost-effective renewable ocean energy,<sup>2</sup> with the aim of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy for all and for achieving the Paris Agreement objectives and the SDGs;

In this regard, call upon all to develop and implement short, mid and long term policy plans and strategies aiming at ensuring that the potential for clean, sustainable and cost-effective renewable ocean energy is optimally captured; and to develop marine spatial plans, that safeguard the biodiversity, resilience, food security, connectivity and services of marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of local communities in that context.

Urge for continued support to the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative, for example by developing renewable ocean energy roadmaps.

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponds to a decline by around 22% from 1990 levels by 2030 (Le Quéré et al. 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Including, but not limited to offshore wind energy, wave energy, tidal energy.

Recommend adopting long term visions and strategies regarding our seas and shores, in synergy with the Long Term Low Emissions Strategies required by the Paris Agreement;

***Climate change and international shipping***

Reaffirm that achieving the balance between emissions and removals of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century as required by the Paris Agreement requires urgent and ambitious action within the sector of international maritime transport.

Recall the commitments of the Tony De Brum Declaration, calling for urgent action in the international shipping sector to reduce GHG. Encourage States to be ambitious leaders in acting on climate change in the shipping sector.

Recall the initial IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships and encourage the IMO to adopt and implement significant GHG emission reduction measures before 2023, in order to help ensure that the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement are met.

Encourage States, international organizations and the private sector to invest and collaborate in research, development and deployment of innovative and effective technologies, zero emission fuels and any other relevant actions and encourage capacity-building and technical cooperation where needed;

Encourage States to provide assistance in particular to developing countries, SIDS and LDCs, in implementing GHG emission reduction measures and consider how to address any disproportionately negative impacts thereof;

Call on the IMO to adopt a revised GHG strategy, by 2023, as agreed taking into consideration IPCC findings, and IMO greenhouse gas emissions studies, so as to secure a healthy future for the oceans and humanity, in particular the survival of the most vulnerable countries.