



Oceans and Law of the Sea

Contribution from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat (“the secretariat”) seeks to contribute to the United Nations General Assembly resolution entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea” (80/110), of 9 December 2025 for the report entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea” on developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including the implementation of the resolution in accordance with resolutions 49/28, 52/26 and 54/33. This report will cover the main recent developments in the UNFCCC process on oceans and law of the sea, for the reporting period between September 2025 to August 2026.
2. Parties have recognized the importance of protecting the ocean and its ecosystems in the Convention and the Paris Agreement:
3. In the Convention, Parties agreed to protect the climate system (Article 2), defined as the totality of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and geosphere and their interactions (Article 1.3, Article 4 (d)).
4. In the Paris Agreement, Parties noted in its preamble the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth.

II. Adoption of and update on the mandate on ocean-based climate action

5. At the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 25) in 2019, in the [Chile Madrid Time for Action](#) (Decision 1/CP.25, para. 30), Parties highlighted the importance of the ocean, including as an integral part of the Earth’s climate system, and of ensuring the integrity of ocean and coastal ecosystems in the context of climate change. COP 25 mandated the first [Ocean and climate change dialogue to be convened in 2020](#), drawing upon the knowledge and scientific findings from the IPCC [Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a changing climate](#).
6. At COP 26 in 2021, in the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) (Decision 1/CP.26 Paras. 60-61), building on the outcomes of the first ocean and climate change dialogue in 2020, Parties invited the relevant work programmes and constituted bodies under the UNFCCC to consider how to integrate and strengthen ocean-based action in their existing mandates and workplans and to report on these activities within the existing reporting processes. Parties also invited the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) Chair to hold an annual ocean and climate change dialogue to strengthen ocean-based action.

7. At COP 27 in 2022, in the COP [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) (Decision 1/CP.27 para. 50) and the CMA [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) (Decision 1/CMA.4 para. 79) Parties were encouraged to consider, as appropriate, ocean-based action in their national climate goals and in the implementation of these goals, including but not limited to nationally determined contributions (NDCs), long-term strategies and adaptation communications.
8. In accordance with [decision 1/CP.27, the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#), developed country Parties selected Ulrik Lenaerts from Belgium as their co-facilitator. Developing country Parties [selected](#) two co-facilitators who will be co-facilitating the Dialogue on a rotational basis, with 2025 Dialogue facilitated by Carlos Márcio Bicalho Cozendey from Brazil, and 2026 Dialogue facilitated by Sivendra Michael from Fiji.
9. At COP28, in 2023, the outcome of the first global stocktake ([Decision 1/CMA.5, para. 180](#)), welcomed the outcomes of and the [informal summary report](#) on the 2023 [ocean dialogue](#) and encouraged further strengthening of ocean-based action, as appropriate.
10. At the same COP, in [Decision 2/CMA.5, para.6](#), Parties adopted the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience ([Decision 3/CMA.4](#)), which includes a range of thematic and process targets for climate adaptation and resilience. A key target is to reduce climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity by accelerating ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, including the management, restoration, and conservation of terrestrial, inland water, mountain, marine, and coastal ecosystems.
11. At COP30 in 2025, Parties adopted the [Global Mutirao: Uniting humanity in a global mobilization against climate change](#), that emphasizes the importance of conserving, protecting and restoring marine ecosystems to achieve the Paris Agreement temperature goal, while underscoring the urgent need to address, in a synergistic manner, the interlinked crisis of climate and ocean degradation.
12. At the same COP, Parties also adopted the [Global Goal on Adaptation](#) (GGA) decision, which contains in its annex, 59 indicators with suggestions for disaggregation including by coastal and marine ecosystems. Further, Parties in addressing the matter [Cooperation with other international organizations](#) inter-alia noted the importance of cooperation amongst the Rio Conventions, as appropriate. The High-Level Champions for Climate Action launched the [Global Climate Action Agenda 2026-30](#), including on “hundreds of million hectares of forest, land and ocean protected or restored.”
13. The [2025 synthesis report](#) by the secretariat on the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, Parties reported a significant increase in ocean-based climate action compared with the previous NDCs, with 78 per cent of Parties including in the new NDCs at least one explicit reference to the ocean – an increase of 39 per cent.

III. The Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue 2025

14. The [2025](#) Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue (“Dialogue”) was held in hybrid mode over two days in conjunction with the sixty-two session of the subsidiary bodies, Bonn, Germany. The Dialogue focused on three topics: Ocean-based measures in the NDCs, second, the ocean under the GGA, and third, Ocean-climate-biodiversity synergies. The cross-cutting issues included means of implementation (MOI), particularly finance, as well as science.
15. Based on the Dialogue proceedings, the co-facilitators prepared the informal summary [report](#) with key messages, including considerations for COP30. All information on the 2025 Dialogue is available on the UNFCCC’s [webpage](#).
16. The co-facilitators of the Dialogue presented the key messages and outcomes at the COP30 opening plenary session; and convened a [special event](#), “2025 Ocean Dialogue Outcomes: Key considerations for COP30 and strengthening ocean action”.

IV. The Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue 2026

17. By the [letter](#) dated 13 March 2026, the co-facilitators laid down their vision for the 2025 Dialogue, and identified three priority areas:

- a) Ocean-based priorities in the NDCs;
- b) Means of Implementation; and,
- c) Ocean-climate-biodiversity synergies and international cooperation.

18. In advance of the 2026 Dialogue, the co-facilitators prepared the [information note](#) which elaborated on their choice of the three topics, the guiding questions, structure and [agenda](#) of the Dialogue. Ten UN agencies provided written contribution to the information note. Further, in accordance with the Glasgow Climate Pact (Decision 1/CP.26 Paras. 60-61), sixteen relevant work programmes and constituted bodies under the UNFCCC reported on how they are integrating and strengthening ocean-based action in their existing mandates and workplans. Annex II of the information note includes updates under the UNFCCC process and UN agencies.

19. The Dialogue was held in hybrid mode over two days in conjunction with the sixty-fourth session of the subsidiary bodies. Further information on the dialogue, including the agenda, webcast and panel presentations is available [here](#) and [here](#).

20. Based on the Dialogue proceedings, the co-facilitators shall prepare the informal summary report that will contain actionable key messages, to be presented at the plenary of COP31.

V. Cooperative activities on the ocean with United Nations entities and observers

21. During the reporting period, the [secretariat](#) continued to strengthen synergies across the UN system by supporting ocean-based climate action through its involvement in key UN initiatives. As a member of the inter-agency coordination mechanism- [UN-Oceans](#), the secretariat regularly shared information on the ocean under the UNFCCC process; co-organized the UN-Oceans [side event](#) at COP30 on “Ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus: leveraging synergies across frameworks”. The secretariat also participated in the UN-Oceans convened Principals Meeting on the theme, “Enhancing coordination, collaboration, and effectiveness in capacity-building through UN-Oceans”.

22. The secretariat was invited to contribute to the preliminary review of the [Third World Ocean Assessment](#). The secretariat contributed to United Nations General Assembly resolution 78/69, Oceans and the Law of the Sea (5 December 2023), and more specifically reported on the recent developments under the UNFCCC related to [marine ecosystem restoration](#), the theme of the twenty-sixth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

23. The secretariat was invited by the co-chairs of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection to present at the [52nd session](#). For the joint collaboration with UNITAR, the secretariat revised the ocean [e-module](#). The secretariat presented at the DOALOS convened capacity building sessions to the [United Nations-Nippon Foundation Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea](#) fellows on "UNFCCC work on ocean and Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue".

24. Serving as a United Nations entity on the [Advisory Board of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science](#), the secretariat contributed to the review of the Decade Programme Submissions, the mid-term evaluation of the Decade, and to IOC’s programmatic work on the ocean. The secretariat was invited to represent on UNDP’s convened [Advisory Board Meeting of the Blue and Green Islands Integrated Programme](#).

25. The secretariat also contributed to a [webinar](#) on ocean-based NDCs convened by the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership secretariat hosted in University of South Wales and delivered a guest lecture to the students on ocean diplomacy. Additionally, the secretariat at the request of ocean observers, presented at various workshops and meetings convened by

observers including by the [Marrakech Partnership on the Global Climate Action Agenda](#), and [COP30 Virtual Ocean Pavilion](#) on “Leveraging the Ocean as the Greatest Ally in Combating Climate Change”.

