



Photo: Fabrice Guerin, UN World Oceans Day 2015 photo contest winner



OCEAN ACTION

Ocean Action Newsletter: Vol. 14

**June 2020: World Oceans Day highlights science-based,
innovative solutions for a sustainable ocean**

un.org/oceanconference

The United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon has been postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis, but it's no time to press snooze on ocean issues. In fact, the zoonotic coronavirus makes it clear that we must build our cities sustainably and avoid encroaching on wildlife habitats, to avoid increasing our risks for disease exposure.

Despite current challenges, 2020 is still a super year for biodiversity, and the UN is working hard this June to promote environmental issues in support of World Environment Day (5 June) and World Oceans Day (8 June).

First up, UN DESA has been organizing a [webinar series](#) to keep up the momentum for ocean action and engage different stakeholder groups on the latest in SDG 14 implementation and offer them a place to network and inspire new partnerships. The first webinar in May brought together more than 400 youth activists, and the second was aimed at private sector representatives. In June, a webinar was held for Asia-Pacific stakeholders, and one for local and regional governments will take place on 23 June. Details about registration for that will be announced [here](#).

The annual [UN World Oceans Day](#) celebration will be an all-day virtual affair on 8 June, where special attention will be given to this year's theme, "innovations for a sustainable ocean." The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Peter Thomson, will kick off a "Spotlight Solutions" segment in which eight ocean scientists and entrepreneurs will present their innovations in a "Shark Tank"-style format. Other speakers include the Secretary-General, the actress Cara Delevingne and the environmental activist Bill McKibben. *More details on this event later in this newsletter.*

Additionally, be sure to check out the [Reboot the Ocean](#) event—a global hackathon featuring inspiring young people with innovative and techy solutions to today's ocean challenges. And don't miss cooking demonstrations by world renowned chefs using sustainably-sourced seafood, live on the [@unworldoceansday](#) Instagram account.

The challenges facing our ocean haven't stopped with COVID-19, and the UN continues working hard to provide many ways to take ocean action now.

UN World Oceans Day: a virtual celebration of the ocean

On Monday, 8 June, the UN launched the first-ever fully digital rendition of its annual World Oceans Day event in celebration of the 2020 theme, "innovation for a sustainable ocean." Produced by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) in partnership with the non-profit organization Oceanic Global, UN World Oceans Day 2020 is a day-long event featuring keynote speeches, panels and presentations kicked off by UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the President of the General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.



This year's celebration will be streamed live from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. EDT on the UN World Oceans Day website, www.unworldoceansday.org/2020, with the content also shared on the Instagram account [@unworldoceansday](#). The event will conclude with a concert for the ocean, featuring performances by international musicians.

Since its inception in 2008, World Oceans Day has celebrated the ocean and its importance to the planet and our lives, while raising awareness about the many threats it faces. As the challenges to the ocean continue to grow, so does the need for novel solutions and the people driving them. The UN's

celebration will shed light on ocean innovations from around the globe in areas of need that are both promising and proven, instill optimism, and have demonstrated the ability to scale effectively. It will also provide a platform to hear from thought leaders who are paving new paths forward for the health of the ocean and the planet.

Featured sessions throughout the day will include an overview of the State of our Oceans by Bill McKibben, a presentation by Sylvia Earle, and remarks by Cara Delevingne, Ellie Goulding, Jaden Smith and Ali Velshi. The renowned Cousteau family will participate in a multigenerational conversation between Jean-Michel Cousteau, Celine Cousteau and Fabien Cousteau, and you can also stay tuned for panel discussions with a wide range of voices including Tom Szaky, Founder of Terracycle, and youth activist Lilly Platt. The programming also will feature a “Spotlight Solutions” segment in which entrepreneurial solutions to ocean problems including plastic pollution and overfishing will be presented in a pitch-like format to the audience. The winners of the Seventh Annual UN World Oceans Day Photo Competition will also be announced.

The annual UN World Oceans Day event marks the kick-off of “World Ocean Week,” during which events hosted by members of the Friends of UN World Oceans Day community and other ocean enthusiasts from around the world will continue the ocean conversation.

Visit www.unworldoceansday.org to find out how you can get involved and participate in events throughout World Ocean Week. Please contact doalos@un.org if you wish to join the network of some 200 organizations collaborating with the UN through the informal Friends of UN World Oceans Day platform. Follow [@unworldoceansday](https://www.instagram.com/unworldoceansday) on Instagram and use #unworldoceansday on social media.

Message from Ambassador Peter Thomson, the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean

Dear Friends,

I had expected to be celebrating World Oceans Day in Lisbon this year, capping off a week of productive engagements at the UN Ocean Conference, but the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. “The best laid plans of mice and men go oft’ astray.”

Yes, the UN Ocean Conference is postponed; but no more than that. The Governments of Kenya and Portugal will host a vibrant conference in Lisbon as soon as new dates can be agreed upon and, in the meantime, we have work to do. For instance, to maintain the momentum on SDG 14’s implementation, I give special mention to the huge global audience that participated each day of last week in the Virtual Ocean Dialogues, hosted by the World Economic Forum and the Friends of Ocean Action. I congratulate all involved on the success of the week.



The theme of this year's World Oceans Day is "Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean," which fits well with the UN Ocean Conference's theme of "Scaling up Ocean Action based on science and innovation." It also reinforces the launch next year of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. The cohesiveness is admirable, for to achieve the resilient future we want for people and planet, the development of the Sustainable Blue Economy will depend overwhelmingly on innovation and Ocean science.

It goes without saying that we must remain resolutely committed to the multilateral process aimed at securing a sustainable way of life for all. This means fidelity to the Paris Climate Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially as we start the recovery process from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have an inescapable moral obligation to our children and grandchildren to maintain the momentum and meet the targets set by these international agreements. And so, as we celebrate World Oceans Day, let us use the day to renew our resolve to faithfully implement SDG 14, the universally agreed goal to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean's resources.

Looking ahead now to the economic recovery roads that are emerging from the pandemic, we see the road to a past of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, of putting a plastic plague upon the Ocean, and of burning fossil fuels to the extent that we were destroying the planet's life-support systems. But there is a second road ahead, an admittedly steeper one, that leads to the bright, clean future we surely want for our children, a road I like to call the Blue-Green Recovery Road. It is now that our voices should be heard loud and clear in favor of that better road, for this is the time when decisions on massive financial commitments are being made on post-pandemic infrastructure and employment packages.

The self-interest of our species demands that we commit to unprecedented reductions in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and get to net-zero carbon by or well before 2050. The Sustainable Blue Economy and the Blue-Green Recovery Road will get us there.

Stay safe and positive and have a Happy World Oceans Day!

Peter Thomson

UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean

You are invited to follow the Special Envoy's [Twitter account](#) and [Instagram account](#), where he shares messages of solutions and strategies for achieving a healthy Ocean through implementation of SDG 14 and fidelity to the Paris Climate Agreement. More information about his work can be found on his website, oceanconference.un.org/SpecialEnvoy.



Updates from the Communities of Ocean Action (COAs)



Coral Reefs

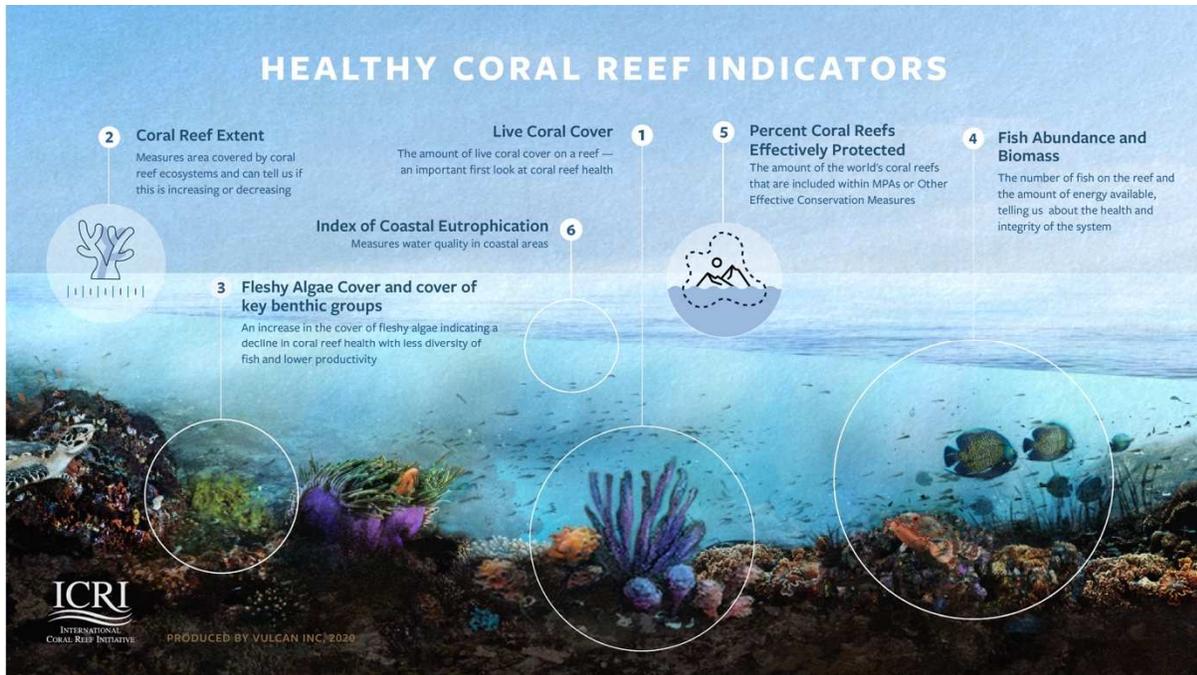
ICRI releases its recommendations for the inclusion of coral reef ecosystems in the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

An ad hoc committee was established by the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) in December 2018 to follow the Convention on Biological Diversity's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework development process and to contribute on matters relating to the critical status of coral reefs and how these can be sufficiently addressed within the Post-2020 framework. After more than 18 months of work and many consultations, ICRI has adopted a [recommendation](#) on the inclusion of coral reefs and related ecosystems within this [Framework](#). The new recommendation and outreach materials to promote it are available at www.ICRIForum.org/Post2020.

Half of the world's coral reefs have already been lost and they continue to decline due to cumulative anthropogenic pressures including climate change, pollution and destructive fishing. ICRI members are strongly encouraging the CBD Parties to prioritize coral reefs by including clear, specific and measurable indicators that will inform interventions aimed at improving ecosystem integrity, quality and function. The recommendation also includes a select number of new indicators that should be developed as a priority for improving feedback on ecosystem integrity and resilience. By monitoring against these indicators, countries can determine their progress, learn what is working or not working and rapidly adapt their conservation actions. These metrics will also contribute to a global understanding of the status of coral reefs. In its Recommendation, ICRI contends that, as a highly critical and vulnerable ecosystem, taking measures to sustain coral reefs will have a ripple effect on other marine systems.

ICRI encourages those who are also Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to reflect these recommendations when developing national negotiating positions in advance of the 15th meeting to the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

For more information please contact Francis Staub, fstaub@icriforum.org.



UNEP to issue reef restoration best practice and guidelines report

Coral reefs cover less than 0.1% of the world's ocean, yet they support over a quarter of marine biodiversity and provide goods and services supporting hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Coral reefs are also one of the most vulnerable marine ecosystems in the face of climate change and anthropogenic pressures, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2019) report projecting coral reefs to decline by more than 99% at 2 degrees Celsius



A diver attaching coral fragments to a coral tree nursery. Photo: Ewout Knoester

of warming. In March 2019, the fourth UN Environment Assembly adopted a resolution on sustainable coral reef management (UNEP/EA.4/I.13) noting that more than 50% of known live coral has been lost in recent decades and that coral reefs are under increasing threats. Clearly, urgent climate action to reduce current pressures on coral reefs is necessary to combat “the coral reef crisis” and ensure the survival of these important ecosystems. However, reducing emissions and stabilizing global temperatures is a long-term approach that could take decades to be realized and thus more active management actions such as coral reef restoration can be pursued to complement climate action and passive conservation measures.

The fourth UNEA coral reef resolution recognized the potential but also the delicate nature of coral restoration and thus requested the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director, in collaboration with partners such as the [International Coral Reef Initiative \(ICRI\)](#) and the [Regional Seas Programme](#) to assist with the compilation of the best practices for coral restoration. Following this request, UNEP’s Coral Reef Unit working in collaboration with [ICRI ad hoc committee on reef restoration](#) and the [Coral Restoration Consortium](#), is producing a global report on “coral reef restoration as a strategy to improve ecosystem services: a guide to restoration methods.” The main objective of the report is to present an overview of coral reef restoration methods and provide a set of clear recommendations for when coral reef restoration may be suitable as a reef management strategy in the upcoming UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. An advanced draft of the coral restoration report has been produced and is currently being reviewed by global experts, and the final report is projected to be published in August 2020.

Coral reef restoration will be an important activity within the UN Decade on [Ecosystem Restoration](#) (2021-2030) that aims to scale-up ecosystem restoration efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Glowing, Glowing, Gone campaign sees progress in campaign to save coral reefs

For the first time in human history we are on the verge of losing not just another species but an entire planetary ecosystem and one of the most biodiverse places on earth. One that supports hundreds of millions of people and a quarter of all ocean life—coral reefs. The fight to save them is a fight we cannot afford to lose. In 2018—the International Year of the Reef—the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) led the development of a coral reef collaboration of inter-governmental organizations, NGOs, and private foundations. They came together to raise public awareness of the crisis facing the world’s coral reefs and related ecosystems and to urge decision makers to prioritize and invest in coral reef conservation and protection.

Not all corals are going quietly. During ocean heatwaves, some corals are glowing in vibrant colors in their desperate bid to survive ocean heatwaves. This “glowing” is the ultimate ocean warning, but it has been going un-noticed. It is only recently that this glowing phenomenon was highlighted in the documentary “Chasing Coral” by The Ocean Agency. This brought to focus the urgency there is to save coral and this led to the creation of the [Glowing Glowing Gone](#) campaign. This brought together organizations such as UNEP, The Ocean Agency, Adobe, Pantone Vulcan, WeTransfer and the World Surf League, among others. The first phase of the campaign kicked off in June 2019 with the announcement of three new Pantone colors inspired by the ocean’s ultimate warning sign—Glowing Blue, Purple and Yellow—generating over 90 media articles in 22 countries. More than 1,500 designers and artists used the Glowing colors to share the ocean’s warning in a global Creative Challenge with Adobe. The most compelling design entries were celebrated on billboards in Times Square in New York and WeTransfer wallpapers, inspiring global support for urgent action to protect coral reefs.

Since its launch in June 2019, Glowing has continued to engage mainstream brands and ambassadors in saving coral reefs – here are a couple more highlights of the campaign:

- In August 2019, the World Surf League incorporated Glowing into its Tahiti Pro Event. The world’s top surfers, including 11-time world champion Kelly Slater, promoted the need for coral reef conservation in interviews, broadcasting the campaign to their individual audiences as well as WSL’s global following. The social media campaign reached over 48 million people and 221,000 engagements over the course of the event.
- UNEP and The Ocean Agency took Glowing to Adobe MAX in November 2019 to recruit and engage designers and brands in coral reef conservation.
- In December, Glowing collaborated with PangeaSeed Foundation and SeaWalls to raise awareness and education amongst the community in St. Croix, Caribbean.
- For World Wildlife Day, Glowing and [Wild for Life](#) campaign teamed up with UNEP Goodwill Ambassadors by sharing Glowing morphs to highlight the species dependent on healthy coral reefs. The activation had 40 million impressions and 4.2 million engagements.
- Glowing has hosted multiple Adobe “Creative Jams” between October 2019 and March 2020, inspiring designers and London schools to learn about ocean conservation through creative editing and user experience design, including the new [“Save the Ocean” video challenge](#) which was launched in April for teachers or parents looking for engaging ways to teach their students remotely while practicing social distancing at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This summer, The Ocean Agency, UNEP and Adobe are launching a new digital activation for the Glowing Gone campaign. Follow [Glowing Gone](#) on Instagram to stay tuned for exciting updates!



Marine Pollution

Circulate Initiative, Ocean Conservancy, Global Resilient Cities Network announce first cohort of partner cities for Urban Ocean program

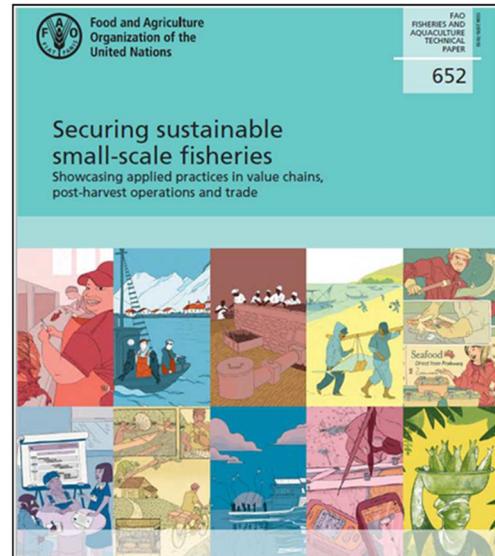
The Circulate Initiative, Ocean Conservancy, and Global Resilient Cities Network announced this month the first cohort of partner cities that will take part in the Urban Ocean program. The program empowers cities in South and Southeast Asia and Latin America to develop circular economies, reduce plastic waste and build cleaner, healthier and more resilient communities for the long term, particularly as they weather the impacts of the current COVID-19 crisis.

Scientists estimate 8 million metric tons of plastic enters the ocean each year due to mismanaged waste—waste that is either never collected or not adequately contained. That’s the equivalent of one

garbage truck of plastic entering the ocean every minute. While plastic pollution costs an estimated US\$2.5 trillion to the global economy annually, the issue has serious impacts on human health and safety as well as the environment. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has both worsened existing vulnerabilities within our waste management systems and exposed new ones.

Over the next 15 months, Urban Ocean will work closely with city leaders in Can Tho, Vietnam; Melaka, Malaysia; Semarang, Indonesia; Pune, India; and Panama City, Panama, known as “learning cities,” as well as other cities from the Global Resilient Cities Network community, known as “mentor cities,” to link them to opportunities that improve waste management and recycling systems; reduce the amount of plastic flowing into the ocean; promote circular economies; support inclusive and equitable economic development; and build resilience for the long term.

The Circulate Initiative, Ocean Conservancy and Global Resilient Cities Network recognize that collaboration between leading cities and partners willing to invest in change at scale will help address these challenges. This first cohort of cities was selected because of their commitment to improving waste management as part of resilience-building efforts and their potential to provide solutions in geographies with high waste leakage rates (learning cities), or because they are leading the way in the fight against river and ocean plastic or in implementing circular economy approaches (mentor cities). Pune (India) is an example of a city doing both through its successful work with the informal sector and has been selected as both a learning and mentor city.



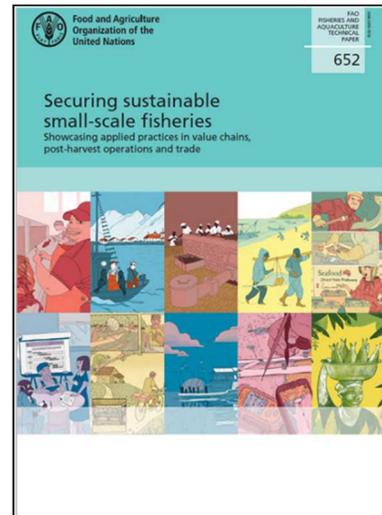
Sustainable Fisheries

New FAO publication connects sustainable fisheries goals with broader 2030 Agenda

The new study from the Food and Agriculture Organization, “[Securing sustainable small-scale fisheries: Showcasing applied practices in value chains, post-harvest operations and trade](#)” supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – specifically SDG 14.b: “provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.”

The [highly anticipated paper](#) includes nine case studies that constitute a rich and diverse selection of experiences, not only with regard to their geographical setting, but also in the topics covered and approaches employed. The case studies were developed to inform and encourage policies and programs that support development of small-scale fisheries, and chosen on the basis that they can be emulated elsewhere by small-scale fishery proponents including, but not limited to, national administrations, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, private enterprises, development agencies and intergovernmental bodies.

The study showcases applied practices and successful initiatives in support of enhancing small-scale fisheries value chains, post-harvest operations and trade, based on the recommendations contained in the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). The SSF Guidelines recognize the right of fishers and fishworkers, acting both individually and collectively, to improve their livelihoods through value chains, post-harvest operations and trade, and recommend building capacity of individuals, strengthening organizations and empowering women; reducing post-harvest losses and adding value to small-scale fisheries production; and facilitating sustainable trade and equitable market access.



Sustainable Blue Economy

Ocean Panel perspectives: accelerating the transition to a sustainable ocean economy

Friday, 12 June 2020, 11 a.m. EDT/5 p.m. CEST

Wrapping up an exciting two weeks of global dialogues and debates with the ocean community around the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing the ocean today, the World Resources Institute (WRI) will be hosting on 12 June 2020 a virtual panel discussion featuring reflections from key ocean leaders and experts from the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy ([Ocean Panel](#)) on the implications for the road ahead for building a sustainable ocean economy. This event will also present key insights from the latest Blue Paper commissioned by the Ocean Panel, called “The ocean transition: what to learn from systems transitions,” which explores future transition pathways and policy or other responses that can help encourage a transition to a more sustainable ocean economy.

The Ocean Panel is a unique group of 14 world leaders committed to advancing a new relationship between humanity and the ocean. Within the coming year, the Ocean Panel will present an action agenda, rooted in science and informed by the work of many, to trigger and accelerate action to overcome challenges and deliver real progress towards a sustainable ocean economy in which effective protection, sustainable production and equitable prosperity go hand in hand.

Register for the webinar here: <https://www.wri.org/events/2020/06/webinar-ocean-panel-perspectives-accelerating-transition>

New Voluntary Commitments

- **Clean Coasts**, [35934](#) (India Youth For Society)
- **Clean Beaches Operation**, [35925](#) (The Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection)
- **Plastic litter and marine fish (PlasM)**, [36048](#) (Thuenen Institute of Fisheries Ecology)
- **Fate of single-use plastics on inland water transport & its catastrophic effect on rivers: An awareness and participatory program to achieve SDG 14**, [36144](#) (Youth Foundation of Bangladesh)
- **Policy strategies to declare 30% of the Uruguayan EEZ a Marine Protected Area MPA-EBSA**, [36282](#) (Oceanosanos/Healthy oceans)

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United Nations

Department of
Economic and
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*This newsletter is compiled by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
Division for Sustainable Development Goals*