



VISION STATEMENT

A global blue economy that sustainably utilizes ocean resources for inclusive and sustainable economic development, job and livelihood creation, food security, poverty reduction and gender mainstreaming, and overall equality.

The Ocean in Crisis

The ocean defines the history, economy, and culture of many coastal countries. But the world's oceans are facing a multidimensional crisis driven by overfishing, pollution (especially plastics and nutrients), habitat loss, invasive species, and climate change (ocean acidification, warming and deoxygenation). Some 35 percent of fish stocks are overexploited; 5 to 12 million metric tonnes of plastic enter the ocean each year; the low oxygen 'hypoxic' areas due to excess nitrogen pollution has been growing at an exponential rate; the loss of coral reef, seagrass, mangroves, and other coastal habitats continues apace; the ocean is acidifying at the fastest rate in the history of the planet with potentially dire consequences for many ocean ecosystems, from tropical reefs to the Antarctic. According to UNDP estimates, the annual socioeconomic costs due to ocean mismanagement amount to nearly US \$1 trillion. Four out of the ten SDG 14 targets had a deadline of 2020: sustainably manage marine ecosystems (14.2), end overfishing and illegal fishing (14.4), conserve 10 percent of coastal areas (14.5), and elimination of destructive fisheries subsidies (14.6), while 2025 is the deadline for the target on marine pollution (14.1). Unfortunately, as of 2022, none of these SDG 14 targets have been achieved and progress in most has been limited.

Globally, the ocean economy is estimated to be worth some \$2.3 trillion per year in (market) goods and services, about the size of the German economy, the world's 5th largest. In many countries, especially SIDS and some East Asian countries, the ocean can account for 20 percent or more of GDP. More than three billion people rely on the ocean for their livelihoods, jobs, and food security, with the majority living in developing countries. The non-market value of the critical ecosystem services the ocean provides, from nutrient cycling to climate regulation, is about ten times larger. The ocean stores some 25 percent of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions and some 93 percent of the additional heat energy generated by the warming climate.



Photos (from top): Lawrence Alex Wu; Michael Akester; Ronny Rondon/Unsplash; Midory Paxton



Despite the above, over the last ten years, ODA to the ocean economy averaged only US \$1.3 billion per year and the scale of public and private investment for ocean restoration and protection remains woefully inadequate; SDG 14 is estimated to receive the lowest level of investment of all the 17 SDGs.

What needs to be done

Clearly to internalize ocean externalities such as overfishing and pollution, the industries responsible for these issues need to internalize the costs of sustainable ocean use into their operations. To accelerate progress on and achieve SDG 14, transformational change is required in several both ocean and land-based sectors:

- **PLASTICS MANAGEMENT:** The use and management of both plastics and nutrients needs to transition to a far more 'circular' approach which combines reduction in use with measures and incentives to recover and reuse these resources.
- **ECOSYSTEM-BASED APPROACHES:** Marine ecosystems need to be managed using integrated, inclusive, cross-sectoral, ecosystem-based approaches at all geographic scales using area-based tools such as Marine Spatial Planning.
- **REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT:** The carbon footprint of ocean-related sectors, particularly shipping and fishing, needs to be minimized through increased energy efficiency and a transition to green energy sources; while not a solution in and of itself, opportunities to optimize carbon sequestration and generate carbon finance through 'blue carbon' initiatives should be refined and scaled up.
- **REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONVENTIONS:** Countries need to meet their obligations under a wide range of existing ocean global and regional legal frameworks, from the Convention on Biological Diversity to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions to the various Regional Seas, Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs), and Regional Fisheries Conventions and Agreements.



Photos (from top): Michael Akester; Max Gudczinski / GEF
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- **MARINE PROTECTED AREAS:** Efforts must continue to increase the scale, representativeness, connectivity, and management effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas worldwide, ideally to achieve 30 percent of the ocean under some form of protection¹.
- **SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD SUPPLY CHAIN:** The fisheries sector needs to continue efforts to scale up sustainable and transparent seafood supply chains while introducing robust measures to ensure effective fishery compliance monitoring and enforcement, harmful fisheries subsidies must be eliminated, and a level playing field for small-scale fishers' access to resources and markets needs to be put in place.
- **BLUE ECONOMY:** Coastal countries and SIDS need to take steps to realize the full potential of their sustainable blue economies through the development and implementation of blue economy assessments, policies, strategies, and plans including a strong focus on community-based actions.

UNDP's Ocean Promise

Over the last twenty-five years, UNDP has mobilized upwards of \$1 billion for ocean protection and restoration actions in over 100 countries. In many cases, these investments have translated into transformational impacts on ocean ecosystems and sectors, including moving the world's largest tuna fishery (W&C Pacific) to 100% sustainability, reversing one of the world's largest hypoxic dead zones in the Black Sea, scaling up Integrated Coastal Management to now cover over 40 percent of East Asian coastline, and significantly reducing the environmental footprint of the international shipping sector. UNDP brings its broad expertise and experience in transforming ocean management and governance at local to global scales, numerous partnerships with UN sister organizations, IGOs, NGOs, the private sector and national governments, and its strong country presence and dialogue with governments.

¹Most marine scientists have suggested that a figure of 30 percent of the global ocean under protection is required to ensure long-term ocean health and recovery. In January 2021, the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People announced its 30x30 targets for the percentage of both land and ocean area under some form of protection.



Delivering on UNDP's Ocean Promise

OVERALL GOAL: By 2030, 100 coastal countries (including all SIDS) realize the maximum potential of their blue economies through sustainable, low emission and climate resilient ocean use that grows economies, creates jobs and livelihoods, improves food security and reduces poverty, inequity and gender inequality.

Towards achieving this goal, UNDP commits to achieving the following **OCEAN PROMISE TARGETS BY 2030:**

ACCELERATE SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY TRANSFORMATION

- **4 million metric tons/year** of presently overharvested global fisheries moved to sustainable use through introduction of sustainable seafood supply chains (via FIPs, certification, etc.) and enhanced fisheries management and governance;
- **11 Large Marine Ecosystems** representing 16.41 million sq km of ocean space and 20.81 million mt/year in annual fish yield achieve multicountry, integrated, cross-sectoral, **ecosystem-based management** through joint strategic planning and implementation;
- **25 SIDS** conduct Blue Economy Assessments and prepare and implement **Sustainable Blue Economy** plans/strategies (incorporating climate action and digital transformation elements);
- **100 countries** with improved policies and regulations on **plastics management** aligned with anticipated legally binding UN instrument to end plastics pollution.



Credit (from top): Secretariat of the Pacific Community;
The Ocean Agency/Ocean Image Bank; Max Gudczinski /
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