



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” (77/248), of 30 December 2022 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 2022 to August 2023.

2.b

importance of
ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth.

3. At COP 25, the Chile Madrid Time for Action 2019, governments recognized the need to strengthen the understanding of, and action on, ocean and climate change under the UNFCCC. COP 25 mandated the first Ocean and climate change dialogue, drawing upon the knowledge and scientific findings from the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a changing climate.

4. At COP 26, in the Glasgow Climate Pact 2021 (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.¹

5. At COP 27/CMA 4, in 2022, the COP Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan (Decision 1/CP.27 para. 50) and CMA Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan (Decision 1/CMA.4 para. 79) continued to strengthen ocean-based action under the process and encouraged Parties to consider, as appropriate, ocean-based action in their national climate

¹ See <https://unfccc.int/topics/ocean>.

to key messages from the 2022 ocean dialogue, the workshop reported how integrated ocean-based solutions can be reflected in national climate policies and strategies.

17. In discussions during the technical dialogues (TDs) of the technical assessment component of the Global Stocktake,¹⁸ Parties highlighted the ocean-induced changes caused by climate change including sea level rise, ocean acidification, coastal flooding and erosion and impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems. A number of ocean-based climate solutions have been mentioned, including marine and coastal nature-based solutions (e.g., mangrove restoration), offshore wind energy, decarbonised shipping (e.g., blue hydrogen), spatial planning (e.g., blue infrastructure) and managed fisheries. In TD1.1, the ocean was mostly discussed in the adaptation round table including with respect to nature-based solutions and the need for spatial planning for marine, coastal and arctic ecosystems. In TD1.2, the ocean was only discussed in the mitigation round table. The need for sector-specific policies including in the fishery industry was also mentioned by participants in this round table. At the recent TD1.3, there was a call for the GST to provide recommendations and guidance to countries on how to effectively include more scientifically-proven ocean-based climate measures in their updated NDCs and NAPs.

18. As part of the implementation of the Marrakech partnership, the MP-GCA Ocean & Coastal Zones aims at leading the way to improve and operationalise the mobilisation of non-state actors to drive forward thinking and deliver on a fair, nature-positive and net-zero future. Following the launch of the Blue Ambition Loop report at COP 27, the MP-GCA Ocean is focussing on identifying breakthroughs in five key sectors: marine conservation, ocean-based transport, marine renewable energy, aquatic food and coastal tourism. Each of these breakthroughs will be science-based and include a finance component. One breakthrough launched at COP 27 is the 2030 Mangrove Breakthrough.¹⁹

IV. The Ocean and climate change dialogue 2023

19. The ocean and climate change dialogue is now mandated as an annual dialogue under the UNFCCC. The 2023 ocean dialogue follows on from the two previ