NO PARIS WITHOUT MONTREAL: RIGHTING THE SHIP FOR THE OCEAN AND ITS BIODIVERSITY

From our coasts to the abyssal depths, the ocean is the largest living space on Earth. The ocean, which remains largely unexplored, could shelter between 500,000 and up to more than 10 million different species.

The ocean is our best ally in the fight against climate change. Both a powerful carbon sink and heat reservoir, the ocean plays a vital role in regulating our global climate system. It is central to the adaptation and resilience of coastal communities and infrastructures with coastal and marine ecosystems acting as continued buffers against the impacts of climate change. At the heart of many communities' culture, identity and values, it ensures food security for more than 3 billion people. Essential to a vibrant blue economy, the ocean generates sustainable employment and livelihood. At the crossroads of all challenges facing humanity, the ocean connects, sustains, and supports us all.

Yet, the ocean is changing rapidly with the world now facing the sixth mass extinction. Human activities are altering the ocean's ability to mitigate climate change, nearing the limit of CO_2 it can absorb, with detrimental impacts on its ecosystems. The functionality of ocean ecosystems must be maintained and restored to continue providing its many services and benefits to nature and people.

Thirty years after the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), world leaders are now negotiating a new framework to stop the decline of biodiversity loss by 2050. The post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to turn the tide and successfully restore the health of our global ocean. It must be the cornerstone of ambitious and holistic international governance for the protection of the world's biodiversity. This can only be achieved through increased political will, supported by non-state actors, and driven by science.

At COP15, in Montreal, all Parties must step up ambition and action to deliver a comprehensive policy framework under the CBD, that can serve as a bridge between the biodiversity and climate regimes, in support of the Paris Agreement and enabling the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is time to right the ship for the ocean and its biodiversity. To that end, we are calling on State Parties to the CBD to:

• Ensure all drivers of marine and coastal biodiversity loss, both in land and at sea, are properly addressed in the framework;

• Minimise anthropogenic pressures on ecosystems and species impacted by climate change and ocean acidification, and reduce coastal pollution and excess nutrients that harm ecosystem function;

• Take action to conserve, restore and sustainably use critical marine and coastal ecosystems, such as coral reefs and blue carbon ecosystems (mangroves, seagrasses and tidal salt marshes), through effective alignment and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in light of the GBF, which are in phase with and could be complementary to countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that include nature-based solutions;

• Recognise the knowledge, rights and stewardship of coastal indigenous peoples, local communities and small-scale fishers to ensure an inclusive framework that can deliver just, equitable and fair policies;

• Ensure that at least 30% of the ocean is protected by 2030 in national waters and areas beyond national jurisdictions (as set out by the Convention's Article 4); while supporting a 100% sustainable management approach to address the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss;

• Eliminate direct and indirect harmful fishing subsidies, as a complement to ongoing efforts on fisheries under the World Trade Organisation, and reorient these incentives, in a socially just and equitable way, towards biodiversity-positive and climate-smart action;

- Increase public and private financial flows to protect and restore marine and coastal biodiversity, reaching on-the-ground actors, to secure adequate and equitably distributed resources, aligned with the objectives of reducing the drivers of biodiversity loss to successfully implement the framework;

- Strengthen scientific knowledge, including the value of Traditional and Indigenous knowledge subject to free, prior informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, of the ocean, coastal and marine ecosystems, building on the UN Decades of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and of Ecosystem Restoration, and through collaborations between scientific bodies such as the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);

- Recognise the importance of the whole-of-society approach and extend the mandate of the Action Agenda for Nature and People as a key vehicle to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, bringing together ocean actors to drive action and financial flows under the Freshwater, Coastal and Ocean Ecosystems Group;

- Review and update the Programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity to align with and facilitate the implementation of a successful post-2020 global biodiversity framework;

- Integrate ocean and climate indicators in the monitoring framework to ensure that parties can regularly review progress related to marine and coastal biodiversity;

- Implement the framework through national processes, as well as through global, regional, and local processes and collaboration (e.g. through synergies and linkages with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ramsar Convention, International Seabed Authority, International Maritime Organisation, Regional Seas Organisations, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations), in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, which calls for international cooperation for biodiversity conservation, including with respect to areas beyond national jurisdiction.

SIGNATORIES:

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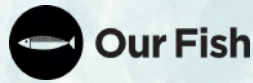
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