

A unique group of leaders who are fast-tracking solutions to the most pressing challenges facing the ocean



## What are Friends of Ocean Action working on?

**The ocean defines our planet. Over half of the oxygen we breathe comes from marine life. It stabilizes our climate, absorbs much of the carbon and heat we produce and provides food, jobs and livelihoods to over three billion people.**

Yet we are causing widespread harm to this planetary lifeline. Human activities have pushed marine species and coastal ecosystems to the brink, and caused the ocean to warm, rise and become more acidic. We are squandering our biggest buffer against climate change, a vital source of food and the largest natural resource on the planet. We have the knowledge, power and technology to put the ocean on a path to recovery.

Together, we can identify solutions, scale up innovations and reverse this cycle of decline to bring about a sustainable ocean economy. The ocean's power of regeneration is remarkable if we just offer it the chance.

Friends of Ocean Action is a unique, informal group of 54 ocean leaders who are fast-tracking solutions to the most pressing challenges facing the ocean. Its members come from business, civil society, international organizations, science and technology. The group is co-chaired by

Ambassador Peter Thomson, the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, and Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden.

The mission of Friends of Ocean Action is to use the knowledge, means and influence of the Friends to help the international community take the urgent steps needed to "conserve and sustainably use our ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" (Sustainable Development Goal 14).

*"It is now well known that the ocean's health is in serious decline. The question is, what are we going to do about it? It is heartening to observe positive action around the world. Friends of Ocean Action have been working hard to fast-track bold, scalable solutions to meet the targets of SDG 14 and assist positive outcomes from the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, 2-6 June 2020. We are all in this together, young and old, public and private sector, science, the media, civil society. No-one is excluded, and the challenge is universal – for there can be no healthy planetary ecosystem without a healthy ocean ecosystem."*

**Ambassador Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean and Co-Chair of Friends of Ocean Action**



Working alongside the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, which consists of 14 heads of government working to optimize policy for informed ocean management, Friends of Ocean Action is mobilizing action aimed at:

- Closing the Pacific Ocean to illegal fishing by 2020,
- Ensuring top seafood companies commit to sustainable fisheries by 2020 and a fully traceable approach to harvesting,
- Making the business case for investing in marine protection, and making available a globally accessible system for monitoring and managing these areas so that 30% of the ocean is protected by 2030,
- Stopping plastics getting into the ocean by 2025,
- Eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies, which are fuelling overfishing and illegal fishing,
- Building a coalition of private sector leaders who commit to advance business innovations and technologies to fully decarbonize the shipping and maritime industry by 2050, helping address climate change,
- Supporting the creation of a centralized hub for ocean data for the global public good,
- Publication of a handbook aiming to demystify the landscape of finance within the sustainable blue economy, and catalyse an increase in finance flowing towards it, and
- Building a multi-stakeholder Blue Food Coalition, designed to stimulate innovation and change in policies and business practices related to aquatic food production with a view to meeting the nutritional needs of the world's population while maintaining the health of marine and other aquatic ecosystems.

The aim is to drive transformative and scalable initiatives in time for the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon on 2-6 June 2020.

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## Plastic pollution - the Global Plastic Action Partnership



Eight million tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean every year. Much of it comes via the world's rivers, which act as direct conduits of trash from the world's cities to the marine environment.

**Action track:** The Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy and Friends of Ocean Action have mobilized a new partnership to avert the growth in global plastic pollution by 2025. The Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) is collaborating with governments and stakeholders in 'hotspot' economies that are battling waste. The partnership aims to translate ambitious business and international commitments into action and show how business, communities and government can redesign the global 'take-make-dispose' economy as a circular one. GPAP is currently collaborating with the governments of Indonesia, Ghana

and Viet Nam to develop national action plans for achieving concrete plastic pollution reduction targets. The partnership aims to have investable solutions in place by 2020, which can then be adapted and implemented in other countries.



Plastic pollution floating at the waterfront in Semporna, Malaysia. © Christian Loader/Alamy

## Marine protection and conservation



The world has less than a year to effectively protect 10% of marine ecosystems by 2020 – a critical step towards a healthier ocean that generates and safeguards the businesses, communities, jobs and livelihoods that rely on a healthy ocean. Today, 8% is protected but many marine reserves are poorly managed or represent standalone efforts with little integration between them. These 'parks in the ocean' should be seen as part of a country's infrastructure, ensuring the viability of industries like coastal tourism and a sustainable supply of food from the ocean.

**Action track:** Friends of Ocean Action is building the business case for marine protection to help inform and engage the private sector on the economic benefits of well-designed and enforced protected areas. This work aims at supporting and complementing the current global efforts advocating to meet the SDG 14.5 target of protecting at least of 10% of the ocean by 2020. The work also aims to increase ambition to 30% by 2030, by mobilizing a coalition of world business champions to join this call and commit to play their part to make this a reality in the next decade.

## Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing



About USD 21 billion a year is stolen from Pacific communities alone through IUU fishing. It threatens the viability of fish stocks, undermines the management of fisheries and robs legal fishers of their livelihoods. It puts food and regional security at risk and is linked to slavery, major human rights violations and transnational organized crime.

**Action track:** Governments set out to end IUU fishing by 2020 – but a breakthrough is needed. To prevent illegally caught fish from coming to market, the Friends are accelerating progress on three mutually-reinforcing fronts:

- Action by businesses, retailers and fishing companies to build and control traceability and transparency in their supply chains – particularly by building on commitments such as the Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration,

- Action by governments to control access to their ports – particularly through progressing, ratifying and effectively implementing the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), and
- Action through the creation of powerful new data capabilities to support (1) and (2).

By moving these efforts forward in concert, Friends of Ocean Action is ensuring that companies and governments agree on the data they require of fishing vessels; corporate enforcement in supply chains reinforces government enforcement in ports; and new data tools provide the robust information on activities on the ocean that will enable them to act. Together, these efforts are building momentum for the real transparency – robust data, digitally available – that is essential to cracking down on IUU fishing.



Fish stand, seafish on display, Mercado de Bolhão, Porto, Portugal. © Imagebroker/Alamy

## Securing sustainable food from the ocean



By 2050, the number of people on Earth will grow from seven to over nine billion. Feeding this growing, increasingly urbanized population requires a safe, affordable and ready supply of nutritious food but the current system of food production is not capable of meeting our future needs. There are increasing pressures on land-based food systems, while over one-third of the world's fisheries are overexploited and at risk of collapse.

**Action track:** Friends of Ocean Action has developed a Blue Food Platform comprising EAT, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions and Stockholm Resilience Centre. This platform has identified the need for more research to understand better the inherent complexities of aquatic food production and the implications of expanding it. To this end, Stanford University's Center for Ocean Solutions and Stockholm Resilience Centre, in partnership with Springer Nature, plan to undertake an assessment of blue food, supported by EAT and Friends of Ocean Action. In addition, the platform is developing a multi-stakeholder Blue Food Coalition designed to stimulate innovation and change in policies and business practices related to aquatic food production. This is with a view to meeting the nutritional needs of the world's

population now and into the future while maintaining the health of marine and other aquatic ecosystems.

## Eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies



Harmful fisheries subsidies – public funds being pumped into the fishing industry that threaten fish stocks, food security, ocean health and the livelihoods of fishers and fishing communities – are estimated to be as high as USD 22 billion worldwide every year. They contribute directly to the persistence of illegal fishing, and the funds would be much better spent on supporting coastal communities.

**Action track:** An agreement to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies is within reach by June 2020 at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, but the pressure must continue. Friends of Ocean Action is targeting efforts at:

- Raising the profile of the damage caused by harmful fisheries subsidies and the need for urgent reform,
- Pushing for a successful deal to be reached,
- Encouraging the participation of small-scale artisanal fishers who would benefit from an agreement on fisheries subsidies by members of the WTO (approximately 80% of fisheries subsidies go to industrial fisheries),
- Inviting UN Environment and other international governmental organizations to take on an active role in supporting fisheries subsidies reform, and
- Galvanizing high-level attention in key countries to support the SDG 14.6 target on prohibiting harmful fisheries subsidies.

## Getting to Zero Coalition



Shipping is the backbone of world trade, transporting around 90% of global goods. The maritime sector is responsible for about 2.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions and could increase by up to 250% by 2050. A global approach must be adopted in order to meet the International Maritime Organization targets, which set out that all fuels used in ships contain no more than 0.5% sulphur by 2020, and shipping industry reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 50% by 2050.

**Action track:** Friends of Ocean Action is supporting the Getting to Zero coalition to drive innovative, science-based changes in the shipping industry to reduce the sector's global greenhouse gas emissions. Alternative fuels, electrification and data for fuel efficiency, other technology innovations and new business models are all needed in order to deliver the targets.

Three levels are explored to shift from dialogue to action:

1. Supply of zero-carbon or low-carbon fuels,
2. Enabling demand for these through financier, charterer and shipowner alignment, and
3. Developing 'rules of the game' that govern the industry and will ultimately define uptake of new fuels and technologies among most players.

## Ocean data



Only 5% of the ocean has been fully explored. Yet, thanks to new technologies, data-processing, advanced sensors and satellites, the access to information we have to date could transform our relationship with the ocean. Tapping into this wealth of data and revolutionizing the way we make sense of, interact with and use it, will require cooperation among leading scientific institutions, private sector players, entrepreneurs and tech companies. Together this network can build a comprehensive open source platform for ocean data, serving the global public good.

**Action track:** Friends of Ocean Action is working with business, civil society, international organizations, NGOs, policymakers and technologists to help the build-out of a comprehensive, open source digital platform that can inform decisions on ocean resources. Particular areas which Friends of Ocean Action will help inform include the governance mechanisms and the partnerships needed across public and private sector to liberate more data to ensure a comprehensive platform.

## Financing ocean innovation



If the ocean were an economy, it would be the world's seventh largest, worth USD 24 trillion, and the value of goods and services from the ocean are forecast to double by 2030. This vast economic worth is at risk due to pollution, climate change and overfishing. Moreover, it feeds 3 billion people who depend on a healthy ocean for their primary source of protein.

**Action track:** Friends of Ocean Action is exploring the opportunities for, risks of and barriers to deploying innovative financing solutions for sustainable investment in the ocean and how these solutions can be scaled up to invest greater volumes of capital in sectors and opportunities for ocean conservation and sustainability, whilst attracting innovators to this space. Part of this effort is focused on the publication of a handbook for ocean finance that seeks to offer a synthesis of the current ocean finance landscape. It will aim to provide financiers, practitioners and decision-makers, active within both the ocean and investment communities, with a clear framework for understanding currently available financing options, investable opportunities and models through which to marry the two.

## Gender parity



Women make up almost half of the total workforce in small-scale fisheries, equivalent to 56 million jobs in developing countries, and they are largely concentrated in low-skilled, low-paid, seasonal jobs without health, safety and labour rights protections. Women also face significant barriers to accessing bank credit, financial resources, governance, technology, market information and entrepreneurial support and are often victims of violence.

**Action track:** Friends of Ocean Action is collaborating with the Council of Women World Leaders, The Nature



Workers at a fish processing factory, Walvis Bay, Namibia. © Oleksandr Rupeta/Alamy

Conservancy, the Economist and other key champions to raise awareness on this issue and open a global dialogue that can mobilize action. This includes showcasing how addressing gender parity in the ocean space can contribute to achieve not only SDG 5 but many other SDGs; and identifying the current obstacles to address gender parity in the ocean context (data, policy, financing, role of business), scoping how to incorporate gender elements across all action tracks the Friends are working on.

## Deep-sea mining



The surge in global demand for cobalt, rare earth elements and specialty minerals for use in electronics, batteries, cars, clean and renewable energy generation is accelerating unprecedented growth in the global rare earth elements market, currently forecast at USD 14.43 billion by 2025. Many of the land-based sources of these rare earth minerals are, however, proving increasingly difficult for companies to mine, coming with rising social, political and environmental complexity. Until recently mining the deep ocean for these elements was neither technologically nor economically feasible, but recent innovations and technological advances are making the deep seafloor more accessible. However, the environmental effects of deep-sea mining on ocean ecosystems are not fully understood and could be irreversible, triggering wider negative impacts across the ocean system.

**Action track:** In collaboration with other knowledge partners and organizations, the World Economic Forum will develop new analysis that will aim at unpacking the different levers and drivers for future of minerals demand, looking at the disruptive and innovative economic models that will come into play in answering to growing consumer pressures to power the Fourth Industrial Revolution and renewable energy.

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