

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



**Our 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 seas 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.

The Friends of Ocean Action is a unique, informal group of 51 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 Peter Thomson, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, and Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden. The mission of the Friends of Ocean Action is to use their knowledge, means and influence 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).

Working alongside the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, that brings the political will of 12 heads of government to mobilising policy for informed ocean management, the Friends of Ocean Action is mobilising action aimed at:

- Closing the Pacific Ocean to illegal fishing by 2020;
- Ensuring the top seafood companies commit to sustainable fisheries by 2020 and a fully traceable approach to harvesting;
- Making the business case for investing in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and make 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 decarbonise the shipping and maritime industry by 2050, helping address climate change;
- Supporting the creation of a centralised hub for Ocean data for the global public good;
- Building and launching an Ocean innovation fund.

The aim is to drive transformative and scalable initiatives in time for the proposed UN Ocean Conference in 2020.

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### Plastics 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 Friends of Ocean Action and the Platform for Accelerating a Circular Economy have mobilised 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' coastal 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. The first collaboration is with Indonesia with further work planned in Ghana and a small island developing state. The partnership is also collaborating with The Pew Charitable Trusts on data analysis and modelling at the national level to drive evidence-based action. The partnership aims to have investable solutions in place by 2020, which can then be adapted and implemented in other countries.

### Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)



The world has less than two years 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 healthy seas. As of January 2019, 7.44% is protected but many marine reserves are poorly managed or represent stand-alone efforts with little integration between them. These "parks in the sea" should be seen as part of a country's infrastructure, ensuring industries like tourism and a sustainable supply of food from the sea.

**Action track:** The Friends of Ocean Action is building the business case for Ocean protection, helping the international community's efforts to address the shift from the current 'ad hoc approach' to marine conservation to a qualitative, coordinated, effective and strategic network of marine protected areas. Backed by a platform for better understanding and monitoring of marine reserves, this Action Track aims to help reach the Ocean Goal target of at least 10% of coastal and marine areas protected by 2020 - to set the path for a more ambitious target of 30% by 2030.

## Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing



About USD\$23.5 billion a year is stolen from communities and coastal nations through IUU fishing – 22% of total production. It threatens the viability of fish stocks, undermines 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 organised 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:

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

By moving these efforts forward in concert, the 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.

## Securing Sustainable Food from the Ocean



By 2050, the number of people on Earth will grow from seven to over nine billion people. Feeding this growing, increasingly urbanised human population requires a safe, affordable and ready supply of nutritious food from the Ocean and other aquatic sources if we are to reduce pressure on land. The current system of food production is not capable of meeting our future needs, with increasing pressures on land food systems while one-third of the world's fisheries are overexploited and at risk of collapse.

**Action track:** The Friends are working with EAT Foundation and its partner the Stockholm Resilience Centre, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Stanford University and WRI to produce a 'blue translation' of what healthy diets from sustainable Ocean food systems might look like. Crucially, the nexus between land and Ocean food production systems will be examined and highlighted. The 'blue translation' report will be launched in 2020 and will show how food from the Ocean will play a crucial role in achieving several SDG targets, not just SDG 14.

## Eliminating Harmful Fisheries Subsidies



Harmful fisheries subsidies are estimated to be as high as USD\$35 billion worldwide. They contribute directly to the decline of fish stocks and the persistence of IUU fishing.

**Action track:** The Friends of Ocean Action are targeting efforts at:

- Encouraging the participation of small-scale artisanal fishers who would benefit from a WTO fisheries subsidies agreement (approximately 80% of fisheries subsidies go to industrial fisheries);

- Encouraging UN Environment and other International Governmental Organisations to take on an active role in supporting fisheries subsidies reforms; and
- Galvanising high-level attention in key countries (particularly China and India), to support SDG 14 targets.

## Maritime and Shipping Sector Emissions



Shipping is the backbone of world trade, transporting around 80% of global goods. The maritime sector is responsible for about 2.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions; emissions from the sector 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:** The Friends are working with the maritime sector on building a 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- 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 revolutionising 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:** The Friends of Ocean Action is working with business, civil society, international organisations, NGOs, policymakers and technologists to help the build-out of a comprehensive, open source digital platform that can inform decisions on ocean resources. Particular angles the Friends of Ocean Action will help inform are the governance mechanisms and the partnerships needed across public and private sector to liberate more data needed for a comprehensive platform.

## Financing Ocean Innovation



If the Ocean was an economy, it would be the world's seventh largest, worth USD\$24 trillion. This vast economic worth is at risk due to pollution, climate change and overfishing.

**Action track:** Companies, financial institutions and policymakers are increasingly aware of the need to shift capital flows to sustainable Ocean solutions that benefit both economies and the environment. Friends are therefore exploring the opportunities, risks and barriers to deploying innovative solutions for sustainable investment in the Ocean, and how this can be scaled.

**For more information, please contact:**  
[@Ocean2020@weforum.org](https://twitter.com/Ocean2020)