

Bring it All Together for the Ocean



HANNES KLOSTERMANN/OCEAN IMAGE BANK

Introduction

Over the next 12 months we have the opportunity to mobilize unprecedented ocean action. The last two years have seen historic agreements to commit [to protect and restore 30% of the ocean and coastal areas by 2030](#); to establish a mechanism to manage and protect [Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction \(BBNJ\)](#) also widely known as the High Seas Treaty; [to end harmful fisheries subsidies](#); to develop a [Global Plastics Treaty](#); and to place the ocean in the main domain of UN Climate Conferences and as a priority of the G20 agenda through the [Oceans 20](#). Ocean science is also receiving greater attention than ever thanks to the [UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#) and the [Vision 2030](#). Now it is time to work together to maximize the impact of these achievements.

In the lead up to the Third UN Ocean Conference ([UNOC3](#)), to be held in Nice, France, 9-13 June 2025, it is vital that we link these agreements in order to accelerate their implementation and propel progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean (SDG14).

The challenge is to “Bring it All Together” on the ocean’s behalf so that action proceeds with cohesion and pace. To achieve that unity of purpose, Friends of Ocean Action, co-chaired by the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, identified a set of key “asks” across **four activation threads**: Ocean-Climate; High Seas Protection; Blue Foods; and Pollution.

At the core of these four strands of work are **five common elements**: (1) mobilizing political leaders on specific issues and to recognize synergies between ocean priorities; (2) enabling data and policy transparency to enable better understanding of ocean challenges and promote sustainable management and social justice; (3) developing and amplifying cross-cutting ocean dialogues and initiatives; (4) strengthening new realms of ocean science to get ahead of emerging challenges and inform and empower decision makers; and (5) unlocking ocean finance and corporate action to address problems at scale and prioritizing access for local communities and vulnerable groups.

By working synergistically to deploy these five elements across the four activation threads, we can Bring it All Together for the ocean and seize this historic opportunity.

1. Ocean-Climate

The ocean is our life-support system and a vital part of the solution to solve the world’s most pressing challenges - food security, energy security, peace, biodiversity, and climate. Supporting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [Ocean Breakthroughs](#) can contribute in scaling-up more ambitious ocean-based climate action and finance in five key sectors (marine conservation, shipping, marine renewable energy, sustainable coastal tourism, and aquatic food) could contribute up to 35% of the emission reductions needed by 2050.

Key ocean-climate asks include, but are not limited to:

- **Strengthening the place of the ocean in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).** In the run-up to UNFCCC COP30, Parties should include more ocean-based climate measures in their updated NDCs and clearly specify the means of implementation.
- **Reinforcing the UNFCCC ocean-climate mandate.** The ocean is increasingly anchored under the UNFCCC; to consolidate this, Parties should request a 5-year “Ocean and Climate Implementation Work Programme” to operationalize the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) Ocean-Climate Dialogue.

2. High Seas Protection

Implementing the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement will safeguard marine ecosystems and promote sustainable resource management for the benefit of present and future generations. Early implementation efforts should take a multifaceted approach that encompasses ecological protection, political collaboration, and enhanced ocean literacy.

Key High Seas protection asks include:

- **Protecting 30 by 30.** The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) commits to protect 30% of the world’s ocean, land and waters by 2030. To accelerate the implementation of both the BBNJ Agreement and GBF’s “30 by 30” target, political leaders should be encouraged to protect 30% of the High Seas by 2030 under the BBNJ Agreement.
- **Cultivating essential political alliances.** Nations taking the lead on BBNJ Agreement ratification can accelerate the implementation of the Agreement by leveraging political momentum at the upcoming Convention of Biological Diversity COP16 in October 2024. Governments should forge alliances to champion the early implementation of an ecologically representative network of fully and highly protected Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) covering 30% of the High Seas, with robust considerations for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) interests.

3. Blue Foods

Producing sustainable “blue foods” from marine environments is vital for food security, livelihoods and reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Over 3 billion people rely on fisheries and aquaculture as their main source of protein and micronutrients, and over 200 million depend on them for their livelihoods, the majority of them in small-scale fisheries. But not all nations have the same opportunities to benefit from sustainable fisheries or to scale up aquaculture in a sustainable way. Equity and sustainability need to be addressed jointly.

Key blue foods asks include:

- **Promoting open and effective transparency.** Governments, industry, and other blue foods stakeholders should embrace existing [transparency initiatives](#) and [priority actions](#) to unlock political and corporate leadership for open data that provides insights into compliance in fisheries governance at international (UN agencies), regional (Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, or RFMOs), and national government levels, including multilateral cooperation in the High Seas.
- **Pushing for an equitable distribution of benefits.** Enabling policies should be established by governments and international organizations to help scale up financial instruments that are directly accessible to coastal communities (with an emphasis on women and IPLCs) to establish sustainable harvest and production systems, and to derive maximum economic and nutritional value from supply chain activities.
- **Getting ahead of emerging challenges.** Governments other blue foods stakeholders should unlock resources to identify emerging challenges (e.g., potential future unregulated high seas and mesopelagic fisheries) and help prevent unintended consequences by strengthening the science, elevating the visibility, and developing policy and governance solutions.

4. Pollution

Ocean pollution poses a grave threat to marine ecosystems worldwide, from the ubiquitous plastic waste to chemical pollutants altering water composition and ecosystem functionality. Even with ongoing momentum to develop a Global Plastics Treaty and a dedicated SDG target (14.1), we are falling far short of addressing the full range of ocean pollutants at the speed and scale needed.

Key ocean pollution asks include:

- **Establishing runoff limits.** National food system commitments made by governments should establish measurable and realistic specific runoff targets to reduce hazardous substances (e.g. synthetic fertilizers) and nutrients entering the ocean, and promote the pivotal role ecological agriculture can play in achieving these targets.
- **Visualizing ocean pollution.** A transparent public platform that provides accessible data and real-time monitoring of pollution levels should be created (accounting for all aspects of pollution, including nutrient runoff, plastics, noise, etc.) to allow governments and industries to identify pollution hotspots and implement targeted interventions.
- **Expanding One Health.** As the health of the ocean ecosystem directly impacts human well-being through its influence on climate regulation, food security, and livelihoods, a dedicated section addressing ocean health should be included within the [One Health approach](#) of the World Health Organization (WHO). This will involve collaborative efforts across disciplines and sectors, including marine biology, public health, policy-making, and conservation.



OPEN PLANET/STUDIO SILVERBACK

About

Bring it All Together is a movement launched by [Friends of Ocean Action](#) hosted by the World Economic Forum, aimed at building on existing momentum and frameworks such as the UN Ocean Decade and others to highlight synergies and critical actions that, if accelerated, will bring us closer to achieving SDG14.

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