

# Ocean Action in 2023

JANUARY 2023

In 2023, the ocean will need ambitious commitments and bold actions from leaders, across all walks of life, sharing the vision of protecting the ocean and keeping us on course to a truly sustainable ocean economy.

Great progress was achieved through multilateralism in 2022, the Ocean Super Year, and we add our voices in gratitude and admiration. In the same breath, we call for a redoubling of resources and effort in 2023 to make good on the historic opportunities enabled by this progress.

During 2022, we called for ocean action in the statements [No Healthy Planet Without a Healthy Ocean](#) and [The Blue Thread for Ocean Action](#) – highlighting major opportunities for the global community to bring about positive changes in support of the ocean's good health. Many leaders heeded this call and we saw the results of their work in tackling ocean challenges ranging from plastic pollution to harmful fisheries subsidies, and from increasing marine protected areas to enshrining the ocean's role in our response to the climate crisis.

In making our 2023 call for renewed ocean action efforts, we are highlighting the following fundamental imperatives:

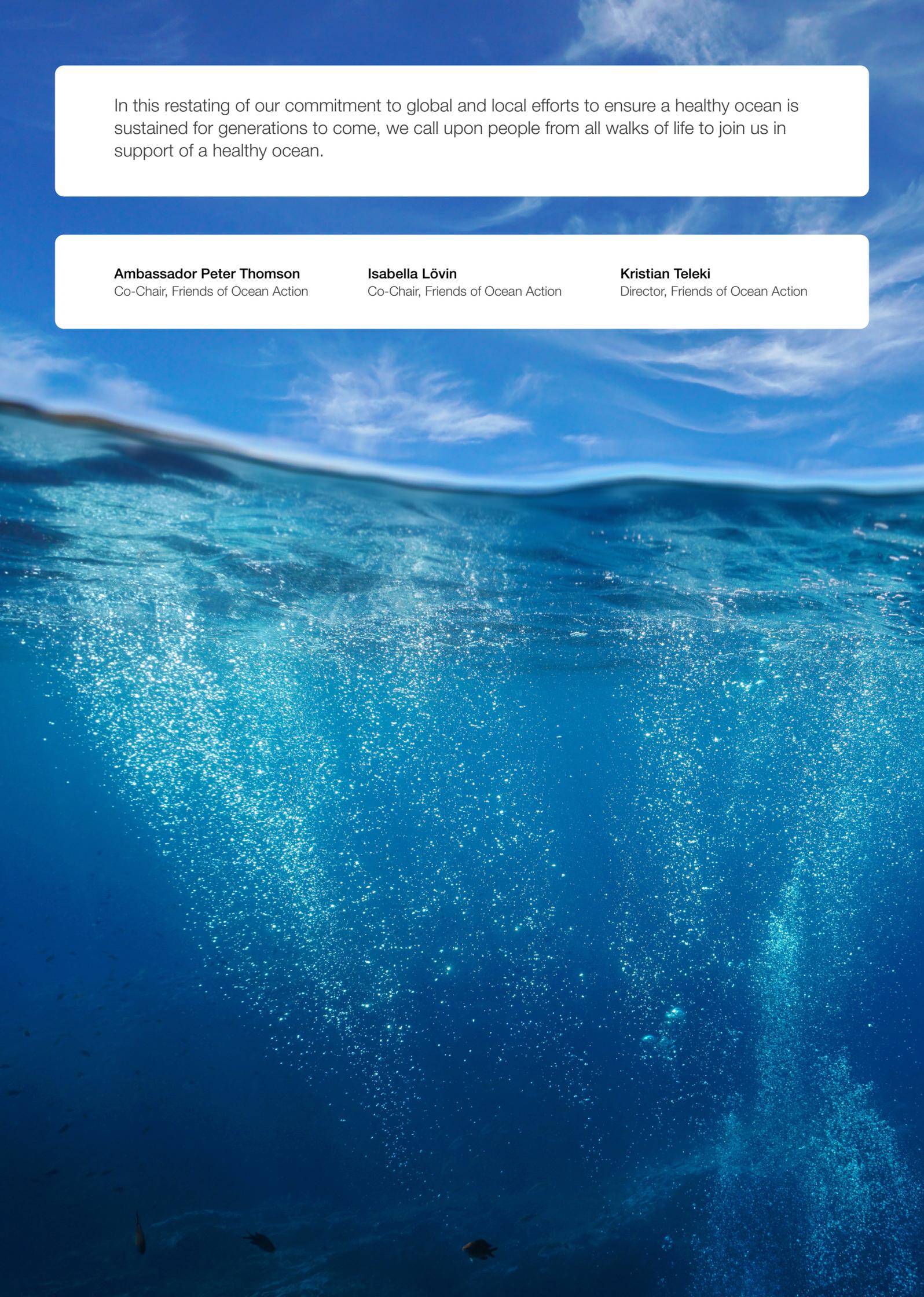
- To **protect the high seas**, a spirit of positive international cooperation is required from all parties to finalize a robust and binding High Seas Treaty at the forthcoming Fifth Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction (IGC5) at the United Nations in New York.
- To **tackle plastic pollution**, multilateral negotiations must achieve agreement on a robust, internationally binding plastics treaty. Following the unanimous agreement reached at the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly to conduct these negotiations, we must all work for positive outcomes in 2023.
- To **end harmful fisheries subsidies**, following the World Trade Organization's historic deal in 2022, governments must now deliver their formal instruments of acceptance to the WTO in order to bring the deal into force without further delay. Meanwhile, they must conclude the WTO negotiations at hand to end the subsidies that fund the overcapacity that is causing overfishing and robbing coastal communities of vital resources.

- To **ensure responsible protection of life in the deep ocean**, we call upon governments and businesses to ensure that a precautionary approach is adopted before any exploitation of deep-sea minerals is undertaken. We make this call in accordance with the ongoing quest of the UN Decade of Ocean Science to provide us with the science we need to sustain a healthy ocean for generations to come, and in accordance with the strictures of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to prevent damage to the flora and fauna of the marine environment.
- To **strengthen ocean protection**, following the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework at CBD COP15 in Montreal, and its inclusion of the all-important target of protecting 30% of the planet's land and sea by 2030, all parties should now seize the opportunity offered by the Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver in February 2023 to agree on required action to reach 30% protection in the ocean.
- To **deepen ocean-climate change action**, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) must now appoint two co-facilitators for the UNFCCC's ocean-climate change dialogues in order to convene meetings and report back to annual UN climate conferences on the state of the ocean, and on developments in its relationship to the mitigation of and adaptation to the climate crisis.
- To **fast-track regional ocean leadership**, a continued focus is needed to empower regional political coalitions and fora to take action for ocean health. A strong example was set at the G20 meeting in Bali, presided over by Indonesia, with the launch of Ocean 20 (O20) – a new agenda for developing sustainable ocean economies across the G20, representing some 45% of the world's coastlines and 80% of global GDP. The O20 baton is being passed to India, which will hold the next G20 Presidency. In a similar vein, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) fora are leveraging encouraging sustainable ocean practices across the Pacific region, including sustainable fisheries practices and ending the scourge of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

To implement these essential areas of ocean action in 2023, we further highlight two indispensable enabling conditions:

- Increased investment in **ocean innovation** is necessary to create ambitious positive change in favour of a healthy ocean.
- Unlocking **ocean finance** is critical for developing sustainable ocean economies across the globe. Emerging sectors such as blue carbon offer real opportunities for stable financing streams, and we encourage efforts to strengthen the governance of this nascent sector.

This raft of ocean action measures is linked closely to the targets of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal for the ocean, SDG14, universally adopted by all UN Member States in 2015. Propelled by the great momentum for ocean action achieved at the 2022 UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, we renew our dedication to working with government and business leaders, along with NGOs, civil society and academia, to advance the implementation of SDG14 in 2023.



In this restating of our commitment to global and local efforts to ensure a healthy ocean is sustained for generations to come, we call upon people from all walks of life to join us in support of a healthy ocean.

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