

Virtual Ocean Dialogues



MEETING OVERVIEW
MAY 2021



Context

We find ourselves again in 2021 with a major gap for the ocean community to come together to shape the agenda for a wide range of international, regional and national forums. With the UN Ocean Conference once again rescheduled, now to 2022, Friends of Ocean Action and the World Economic Forum are filling this gap by hosting the Virtual Ocean Dialogues as a moment for the global community to come together to safeguard the ocean's well-being.

The Virtual Ocean Dialogues, first hosted in 2020, has become a flagship event for Friends of Ocean Action. It is a powerful platform to highlight critical issues and advance SDG14+, which underscores how solving ocean issues helps us reach other SDGs and how changes in the ocean affect the planet, the economy and society. This year, the event will focus on the role of the ocean in the suite of multilateral environment-focused international forums coming soon. Ocean issues will inform these global events in terms of substantive content as well as identify where stakeholders from around the world can contribute and offer support.

The dialogues will be available on [TopLink](#), the World Economic Forum's digital collaboration, knowledge and community platform and can also be accessed [here](#). The dialogues are also being held as part of a broader, high-level, virtual forum convened by the World Economic Forum, the Mission Possible Partnership and Friends of Ocean Action together with the UK COP26 Presidency, the High-Level Champions for COP26 and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean. These meetings seek to advance the systemic changes needed to address critical ocean issues and achieve ambitious targets for a 45% reduction in annual emissions by 2030 and net-zero global emissions before 2050.

Objectives

- Mobilize action for a healthy ocean through influencing relevant networks, industries and sectors
- Advocate for sustainable policies, measures and regulations
- Lead by example through sustainable, ethical and legal business practices
- Communicate the importance of ocean health to critical global stakeholders
- Raise global ambition for the achievement of SDG14, the ocean goal
- Ensure the state of the ocean remains high on the global agenda

Sessions

Tuesday 25 May 09.00-10.15 CET

Leveraging the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development: Bridging Science and Solutions science and solutions

The year 2021 marks the launch of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, offering a framework to catalyse transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and the ocean. As the Ocean Decade begins, experts look to harness data, innovation, science and technology to strengthen the integrated management of the ocean and coasts for the betterment of humanity, something that will only be accomplished through deep intersectoral and public-private partnership. This session, being held in collaboration with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO), will explore the potential of the Ocean Decade in moving from science to solutions for sustainable development. Looking ahead to 2030 and beyond, how can the Ocean Decade be leveraged to stimulate the creation of innovative public-private partnership models? How can the work of leaders in the science-technology-innovation nexus, including the next generation of ocean professionals, be amplified through the Ocean Decade? How can relevant science-based knowledge be more equitably generated and used by communities most vulnerable to the current and future changes of the ocean?

Tuesday 25 May 12.00-13.15 CET

Food from the Ocean, Rivers and Lakes – Essential for Food Systems

Aquatic/blue foods play a vital role in food systems but are often missing from the conversation. This session aims to address that. A healthy ocean means healthy people – the ocean and other aquatic ecosystems are fragile but have the potential to be pillars of local food systems if those systems are transformed to be more sustainable, nature-positive and accessible. It is vital that food systems allow access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods that meet the dietary needs and food preferences of a growing population. The interconnection between land and ocean food production are also too often ignored when thinking about food system transformation. The UN Food Systems Summit provides an opportunity to address these gaps and develop solutions to feed the world through systems that are good for the land, good for the climate, and good for the ocean.

This session is part of both the Virtual Ocean Dialogues and the Global Dialogue for the UN Food Systems Summit. It is being co-convened by the Special Envoy of the Food Systems Summit Agnes Kalibata, Special Envoy for the Ocean Peter Thomson, Friends of Ocean Action, the United Nations Foundation, and Norway.

Tuesday 25 May 16.00-17.15 CET

Ocean and Biodiversity in the Run-Up to COP15

The world faces an unprecedented biodiversity crisis, brought on by the rapid transformation of the natural environment and global climate change through human development. But the ocean can provide solutions to these challenges: it regulates global climate, feeds communities around the world, and provides a source of income and a way of life for millions of people. If sustainably managed, the ocean can continue to provide resources and adaptation capacity, supporting people and economies through its rich biodiversity. The Convention on Biological Diversity's COP15 will adopt new global goals and targets for biodiversity, providing a major opportunity to change the trajectory for the ocean and the life therein. How do we best make use of this historic opportunity?

Wednesday 26 May 08.00-09.15 CET

Trade and the Environment: An Ocean of Opportunity

Harmful fisheries subsidies of over \$22 billion every year fund activities that encourage overfishing, overcapacity and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing – pushing fish stocks to the brink and jeopardizing food security and the survival of sustainable, small-scale fisheries around the world. Negotiations have been ongoing for over 20 years at the World Trade Organization to reach a binding global deal to end these perverse subsidies, now also in line with Target 6 of the Sustainable Development Goal for the Ocean, SDG14. This year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, chaired by New Zealand, is a critical opportunity for the global community to come together on this critical issue, considered a litmus test for “greening” the multilateral trading system.

Wednesday 26 May 16.00-17.15 CET

Ocean-Based Climate Solutions: Tapping the Ocean's Potential for COP26 Success

Nations will convene in Glasgow this November for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP), a critical juncture in the world's fight against climate change. Parties will review progress made since the Paris Agreement and are expected to bring to the table new and updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that are designed to ratchet climate ambition higher. Since the last conference in Paris, awareness of the ocean's potential and importance as a tool for climate mitigation and adaptation has grown immensely. This session will seek to address the following questions: How can the potential of marine nature-based climate solutions be unleashed? How can countries best work to incorporate these into their NDCs? And what role can the private sector and civil society play in supporting the achievement of these NDCs?