

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, all courtesies observed.

My task today is to report to you the progress in the development of ocean science since 2017 and present potential perspectives that were created from the last week seminal UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, which had science and innovation as its central tenet.

Why is it crucial? Because ocean science is behind the possibility of achieving all SDGs, not only SDG 14.

This topic is massive. I will be able to offer you only few confirmed facts for your own further thinking. The IOC monitors the state of ocean science, and the state of the ocean and of the ocean management through the Global Ocean Science Report, and now the State of the Ocean Report, and this is what I can report from those sources:

1. We note significant expansion in the output of ocean science. The number of published articles roughly tripled from 2010 to 2017 and this trend has continued to 2022. Much of this increase is driven by the Eastern and South-Eastern Asia region.
2. Statistically, we found evidence that regional and international collaboration is expanding and resulting in higher-quality ocean science.
3. There is massive development of ocean technologies. EDNA results now in ten-fold increase of data on marine life, as reports the IOC Ocean Biodiversity Information System. This is revolution: we are starting to meaningfully monitor ocean life!
4. The role of indigenous and local knowledge systems is now more fully recognized and numerous initiatives are underway to embrace indigenous and local knowledge in decision making and policy.
5. Geographical, gender and geographic disparities in ocean science remain. Female scientists only account for 37% of ocean science professionals. Younger generations experience obstacles to engagement in ocean science. They lack clearly defined career paths.
6. Scientific capacity in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States lags behind the rest of the world, despite good progress in the building capacity development efforts including through south-to-south cooperation.
7. In terms of the science-policy interface, the capacity of policy makers to access and use relevant science remains weak in many countries. Targeted efforts are required to increase the ocean literacy of users of ocean science.
8. Importantly, on average, less than 2% of national research budgets are dedicated to ocean science. While philanthropy plays an essential role, a step change is needed in the volume and type of financing for ocean science, including the development of new financing mechanisms.
9. Ocean observing networks remain considerably less sustainable than their meteorological counterparts. And the COVID 19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the challenges and left a scar in ocean observations datasets, forever.
10. Sustainable ways of managing the ocean, e.g. through MSP are multiplying and now exist in approximately 70 countries in the world.

These were the current baselines.

Here today I can report revolutionary and positive developments, exactly from 2017, the year when the UN General Assembly proclaimed the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, 2021-2030. Commenced during that period, the Decade has already demonstrated its enormous convening power. With focus on co-design and co-delivery of solutions, the Ocean Decade now provides a global framework for diverse actors to collectively identify, generate, use, and invest in the most relevant ocean science priorities. 43 global programmes and over 140 projects are underway around the world, involving thousands of partners from government, academia, civil society, industry and philanthropy.

The 2022 UN Ocean Conference generated enormous momentum for ocean science, as is reflected in the adopted political declaration. What is the most promising way forward after Lisbon?

Integrated ocean management, underpinned by sustainable ocean planning, is emerging as a most promising internationally recognized framework able to change the future of the ocean. The members of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy have committed to sustainably managing 100% of their EEZs by 2025. The IOC is working with partners on using the Ocean Decade to expand concepts of sustainable ocean planning beyond the 17 members of the Ocean Panel.

Summarizing, there is, at present, a unique but short, window of opportunity to transform the ocean science and on that basis start managing the ocean sustainably and successfully, helping to address issues of adaptation and mitigation of climate change, reverse the decline in ocean health, and contribute to human wellbeing and ocean economy – all sustainably.

Let me call on all of you to join this global movement and use the Ocean Decade to achieve SDG14 and create the ocean we want by 2030, leaving no one behind.

Thank you.