

The world is experiencing a revolution in terms of rapid advancement of knowledge and innovation, and in terms of society's recognition of the importance of science to support policy and actions to enhance human health and wellbeing including via the framework of the 2030 Agenda. This latter is particularly true in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which has put a spotlight on the need for science to respond quickly to society's emerging priorities.

Post-COVID recovery is occurring in a complex and dynamic social, political and ecological landscape, with inter-related biodiversity and climate crises driving poverty and social inequity. The place of the ocean in the post-COVID context is central; the ocean is arguably humanity's biggest ally in the fight against climate change, and its natural resources underpin the livelihoods and food security of billions of people, including marginalised groups. If the ocean is managed in an unsustainable manner, the resulting impacts on climate and biodiversity could create negative feedback loops with concurrent humanitarian and social crises, and significantly hamper our collective ability to achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda.

Ocean science is central to sustainable ocean management and to the achievement of numerous of the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, including not only Goal 14 on the ocean, but also the Goals subject to in-depth review by the HLPF: Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation given the inextricable links between freshwater and marine ecosystems, Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy given increasing reliance on ocean and coastal based sources of renewable energy, Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure given the role that ocean based innovation and technology will need to play in meeting climate and food security aspirations, and Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities given the concentration of human populations in coastal cities which need to be rendered resilience to changing climate conditions and ocean hazards.

In 2017, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the [United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development \(2021-2030\)](#) ('the Ocean Decade') to stimulate ocean science and knowledge generation and thus reverse declines in the state of the ocean system while catalysing new opportunities for sustainable ocean uses and contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The vision of the Ocean Decade, which is coordinated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, is '*the science we need for the ocean we want*'.

The Ocean Decade provides a convening framework for scientists and stakeholders from diverse sectors to develop the scientific knowledge and the partnerships needed to accelerate and harness advances in ocean science to achieve a better understanding of the ocean system, and to deliver science-based solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. After two years of implementation, 47 global, transformative, solutions-oriented ocean science initiatives are working in the framework of the Ocean Decade and convening over a thousand partners to generate knowledge and understanding to inform policy and management on issues as diverse as: knowledge and innovation for sustainable blue foods; the effects of ocean acidification on biodiversity; disaster risk resilience and early warning systems for coastal cities; the use of AI to improve integrated management of freshwater and marine ecosystems; and knowledge to inform ocean-based carbon dioxide removal innovation. Given its strong focus on user-driven science, and the diversity of actors that are engaged including Member States, academia, industry, civil society, and philanthropy, the Ocean Decade is also clearly contributing to the achievement of Goal 17 on partnerships.

Key messages for inclusion into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit could include:

- In the post-COVID world, the rapid pace of the intertwined biodiversity and climate and an increasingly complex social, economic and ecological landscape ensure that the need for user-driven knowledge and science to underpin policy and management is greater than ever.
- Relevant, timely and transformative ocean science is a prerequisite for sustainable management of the ocean, which itself is central to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and to the fulfilment of numerous goals including not only Goal 14, Life under water, but also Goals 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.
- The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, coordinated by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, provides a global framework for diverse actors to

collectively generate ocean science and knowledge to meet national, regional and international policy and management needs, including numerous targets of SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, 14 and others.