



HIGH LEVEL PANEL for
**A SUSTAINABLE
OCEAN ECONOMY**

PRESS RELEASE

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**Ocean-Based Climate Action Could Deliver a Fifth of
Emissions Cuts Needed to Limit Temperature Rise to 1.5°C**

Call to Action by World Leaders

NEW YORK (SEPTEMBER 23, 2019): Ocean-based climate action can play a much bigger role in shrinking the world's carbon footprint than was previously thought. It could deliver up to a fifth (21%, or 11 GtCO₂e) of the annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions cuts needed in 2050 to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Reductions of this magnitude are larger than annual emissions from all current coal fired power plants world-wide.

This is a key finding of a new scientific report, *The Ocean as a Solution for Climate Change: 5 Opportunities for Action* (1), published today at the U.N. Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in New York. The report, produced by the Expert Group (2) of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (3) – a group of 14 heads of state and government – provides the first ever comprehensive, quantitative analysis into the role that ocean-based solutions can play in the fight against climate change.

“Our future health and prosperity are closely linked to the state of the ocean,” said Erna Solberg, co-chair of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and **Prime Minister of Norway**. “This report signals an exciting new pathway to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. Coupled with land-based emissions cuts, it shows that ocean-climate action could provide a lifeline for the economies, food sources, coastal communities and sea life at the frontline of climate disruption.”

Global action to address the state of the ocean has never been more urgent. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* (to be released on September 25), is expected to highlight major threats to the ocean from climate change, such as declining fish stocks, rising sea levels and increasing ocean acidification. Yet today's new report highlights solutions that would help curb climate change and contribute to the development of a sustainable ocean economy while protecting coastal communities from storms, providing jobs and improving food security. These solutions include:

- Scaling up ocean-based renewable energy – which could save up to 5.4 gigatonnes of CO₂e annually by 2050, equivalent to taking over a billion cars off the road each year.
- Decarbonising domestic and international shipping and transport – which could cut up to 1.8 gigatonnes of CO₂e annually by 2050.

- Increasing the protection and restoration of “blue carbon” ecosystems - mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes - could prevent approximately 1 gigatonne of CO₂e from entering the atmosphere by 2050.
- Utilising low-carbon sources of protein from the ocean, such as seafood and seaweeds, to help feed future populations in a healthy and sustainable way, while easing emissions from land-based food production could support emission reductions of up to 1.24 GtCO₂e each year by 2050.

In response to the report, the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy issued an urgent Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action today (4), to inspire political commitments, business partnerships and investments to set us on the new pathway to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.

“In Palau, ocean and human vitality are interwoven in our history and culture: we’re testimony to how the ocean and climate are inextricably linked and connect us all,” said Tommy Remengesau, Jr., co-chair of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and **President of the Republic of Palau**. “Now the solutions, which the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy have offered today, show how we need to work with, and not against the ocean. Doing so will protect the most vulnerable nations, like ours, from the full force of the climate crisis. This untapped potential provides hope. Humanity must seize it.”

The **U.N. Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean**, Peter Thomson, responded to the report by saying: “The world already has the technologies it needs to put ocean-based climate solutions into motion. To stay true to the Paris Climate Agreement and hold warming at 1.5°C, we urge all states to include ocean-based climate solutions in their revised Nationally Determined Contributions next year.”

Members of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy are already coming forward with early action and new ocean-climate commitments (5) in advance of the U.N. Ocean Conference next year:

- **Australia** is investing AUD\$70 million in the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), a 10-year \$329 million collaboration between 45 Australian and international partners to develop innovative and sustainable offshore industries to increase Australian seafood and marine renewable energy production.
- **Fiji** is committing to making their shipping sector 100% carbon-free by 2050.
- **Japan** will promote demonstration projects aiming at early commercialization of marine renewable energy.
- **Kenya** will incorporate blue carbon ecosystems into its nationally determined contribution, in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts and WWF.
- **Mexico** will declare an additional 31 fishing refuge areas bringing more than 100,000 hectares under sustainable management.
- **Namibia** is committing an additional US\$5 million towards ocean research and protection over 2019/2020.
- **Norway** is committing to halve its emissions from domestic shipping and fishing vessels by 2030.
- **Portugal** is committing to produce 10% of its electricity by floating offshore wind and wave energy by 2030.

“Fiji is leading Pacific Island States in a united and visionary response to the ocean’s untapped potential to combat global warming” said Frank Bainimarama **Prime Minister of Fiji**. “We are committing our whole EEZ to 100% integrated management with 30% to marine protected areas by 2030 as well as collectively committed to cutting 40% of emissions from Pacific shipping by 2030, and we’re making our shipping sector 100% carbon-free by 2050. Together, we’re moving towards managing our waters sustainably.”

The Call to Ocean-Climate Action has also spurred responses from other organisations today.

- The **Getting to Zero Coalition** launched today with industry partners to work towards having commercially viable zero emission vessels operating along deep sea trade routes by 2030, supported by the necessary infrastructure for scalable zero-carbon energy sources including production, distribution, storage and bunkering.
- **The Pew Charitable Trusts** is launching a 3-year initiative to support countries to incorporate coastal wetlands and coral reefs into their National Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. They will work in partnership with governments, researchers and other NGOs.
- **The Chilean Salmon Aquaculture Association** (SalmonChile AG) has highlighted the objective of reaching 50% carbon neutrality by 2020 and 100% by 2025 of its member company "Salmones Camanchaca", setting an example of leadership for other companies to follow.
- Accelerating efforts to secure sustainable food from the ocean, in support of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy’s Call to Ocean-based Climate Action, the **SeaBOS Initiative**, representing ten of the largest seafood companies in the world, operating in wild capture fisheries, aquaculture, and feeds, will advance strategies to enhance sustainable fisheries, and investigate mechanisms to adapt to climate change impacts on seafood production. These industry leaders have been working to refine science-based strategies for global action, aligned with the High Level Panel’s efforts to accelerate action to secure a sustainable ocean economy.
- **Ørsted and Equinor**, two companies in the forefront of offshore renewable energy, have today announced the creation of a new industry-led coalition to scale up ocean-based renewable energy in support of efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement. The coalition is bringing together leading ocean industry players and will present a roadmap for action at the U.N. Ocean Conference in June 2020.

“The High Level Panel’s Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action demonstrates the value of protecting coastal wetlands as a nature-based solution, which is integral to the global effort to build resilience and protect our ocean in a changing climate. Coastal habitats are among the planet’s most biologically rich ecosystems. They protect shorelines during storms and are critical for carbon sequestration, making them an important part of mitigation and adaptation efforts for countries that have signed the Paris Agreement,” says **Tom Dillon, Vice President and Head of Environment for The Pew Charitable Trusts**.

“We support the Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action from the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and agree that the full phaseout of GHG emissions from shipping will only be possible with the introduction of zero-carbon fuels. Hence, it is our ambition to accelerate the deployment of commercially viable deep-sea zero emission vessels by 2030,” says **Johannah Christensen, Managing Director, Global Maritime Forum, a partner of the Getting to Zero Coalition**.

“The Global Environment Facility welcomes the leadership of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy in issuing the Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action. Our coastal communities are on the front line of climate change, but have an incredible ally in the ocean,” said **Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility**. “As this report shows, ocean-based climate solutions can deliver a sustainable ocean economy that both protects our oceans and supports economic livelihoods.”

“The only way we can combat climate change is by working together to take real action, and on behalf of Ørsted, and Equinor, two of the world-leading offshore wind developers, I am delighted to announce this new coalition for action for offshore renewable energy. The report reveals that ocean renewable energy, and in particular offshore wind energy, has a huge potential to help mitigate climate change, so we are looking forward to bringing industry players together, in response to the High Level Panel’s Call to Ocean-Based Action, to understand how we can take an international perspective to the challenges we will face and coordinate in our action to unlock the full potential of ocean renewable energy to prevent global overheating,” says **Benj Sykes, Vice President at Orsted and leading on the Coalition for Action for offshore renewable energy**.

“The ambition of SeaBOS members is to increase the production of healthy and sustainable seafood, and to improve ocean health overall. The members recognise the positive benefits that eating more sustainably produced seafood can have at lowering the global food carbon footprint, as called for by the High Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, and also note that it would have positive social and ecological impacts to have a healthier ocean. These efforts will help shine a light on the science-based solutions that industry will need to prioritise to increase sustainable seafood production, improve ocean health. Combined, those actions will assist in reducing the overall carbon footprint of protein production and food sources globally,” says **Mr Shigeru Ito, Chairman SeaBOS, also CEO and President Maruha Nichiro Corporation**.

Notes to Editors:

- 1) Read *The Ocean as a Solution for Climate Change: 5 Opportunities for Action* at www.oceanpanel.org/climate
- 2) The High Level Panel Expert Group is made up of experienced researchers and policy analysts from around the world. The group provides and reviews relevant scientific input and proposes practical solutions to the questions and challenges raised by the Panel.
- 3) The High Level Panel is the only ocean policy body made up of serving world leaders, with the authority needed to trigger, amplify and accelerate action for ocean protection and production in policy, governance and finance. Australia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, Norway, Palau and Portugal are all represented on the Panel. Learn more at oceanpanel.org.

World Resources Institute (WRI) serves as the Secretariat for the High Level Panel. Learn more at www.wri.org/our-work/topics/ocean.

- 4) Read the High Level Panel’s **Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action** at www.oceanpanel.org/climate
- 5) Read the full list of commitments made by countries and coalitions at www.oceanpanel.org/climate.

For further information and interview requests contact: Rhys Gerholdt, World Resources Institute, rhys.gerholdt@wri.org, +1-202-341-132

FULL LIST OF APPROVED QUOTES

Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Australia

“Australians, along with our Pacific family, are coastal people, and the Australian Government is committed to ensuring the long-term health of our shared ocean. We understand the importance of a healthy ocean to livelihoods, security, and sustainability, and the need to collectively address the threats to our ocean, including climate change.

Australia is taking action to underpin the High Level Panel’s Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action. We are protecting coastal habitats such as reefs, mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrasses through our leadership on the International Partnership for Blue Carbon, the establishment of a new Indian Ocean Rim Association Blue Carbon Hub, and our historic levels of funding to protect the iconic Great Barrier Reef. We are also creating jobs and investing in marine industries through the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre, which brings together Australian and international partners with expertise in aquaculture, marine renewable energy and engineering. I look forward to working with my fellow Panel members to bring forward a roadmap for a sustainable ocean economy in 2020.”

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, Republic of Ghana

“With an ever-growing global population, the sheer magnitude of human pressure on the ocean is severe. We must do all we can to ease it by limiting global warming. Failure to act now could have catastrophic economic, environmental and human consequences. I call upon my Fellow African Heads of State, Regional Institutions and Citizens to work with the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy to implement its Call to Ocean-Climate Action.”

President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, Republic of Kenya

“Our planet is sustained by the ocean which supports all life by generating oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide, recycling nutrients and regulating global climate and temperature. The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy expands the range of opportunities for sustainably tapping into the ocean as a source of wealth creation and as a source of food and livelihood. The Panel provides us with scientifically proven ideas on how to harness the vast ocean resources for the benefit of today’s generation while protecting them for future generations.”

Vice President Jusuf Kalla, Republic of Indonesia

“Indonesia views the Panel as an important partnership to push for more strategic efforts for a healthier and productive ocean that complement other global efforts. Indonesia applauds the Panel’s achievement in launching the Call for Ocean-based Climate Action. Indonesia particularly underlines the importance of sustainable management of mangroves as a large carbon sink and support system for the livelihood of coastal communities.”

Minister Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Mexican States

“The links between the health of our ocean and climate change are so profound that we cannot attempt to solve the crisis of one without confronting the crisis of the other. That’s why Mexico is fully committed to the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy’s Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action, and strongly supports ocean-based solutions to climate change. Bolstering our natural defences not only builds opportunities for prosperity, it also makes our most vulnerable communities more resilient to the challenges of a warming world.”

President Hage G. Geingob, Republic of Namibia

“Namibia is fully committed to ensure that our blue economic activities sustain biological diversity, enhance climate change resilience and a healthy ocean, while providing jobs and food security”

Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Norway

“Norway has already made bold commitments to capitalize on the ocean’s untapped potential to limit global warming. We’re working with the shipping industry to halve its emissions by 2030, and we’re providing significant funds to expand the offshore wind energy sector.”

Prime Minister António Costa, Portugal

“About 97% of Portugal’s territory is ocean – it is the life source of our country. Not only does it provide employment, food security and biological diversity, it also protects us from the worst impacts of climate change by absorbing heat and storing carbon. Having decided on the importance of promoting regional and international cooperation in order to mobilize strong and more ambitious action in ocean affairs by Governments, civil society, industry, universities, research centers or NGO's, we fully support today’s Call for Ocean-Climate Action by the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. Maintaining the vital role the ocean plays demands responsible, sustainable approaches to its economic development, as well as immediate action on land and at sea to limit global heating.”

Hon. Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., Oregon State University and Co-chair of the HLP Expert Group

“For far too long the ocean has been mostly absent from serious policy discussions about reducing carbon emissions. Now, thanks to a new scientific analysis conducted for the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, and with High Level Panel countries and industries poised to act, the ocean is squarely on the climate mitigation agenda. Ocean-based actions provide hope that reaching the Paris Agreement target of 1.5 degree might be possible.”

Hon. Mari Elka Pangestu, Ph.D., University of Indonesia and Co-chair of the HLP Expert Group

“Climate change poses stark risks to the industries that underpin the ocean economy, such as fishing and tourism. Many developing countries also depend on these industries and these risks will jeopardize the livelihoods of millions of people. It is our hope that the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy’s Call to Ocean-based Climate Action will catalyse the actions, partnerships and investments needed to support the implementation of the five ocean-based climate areas as major contributors to climate change mitigation.”

Professor Peter Haugan, Ph.D., Institute of Marine Research, Norway and Co-chair of the HLP Expert Group

“The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy’s report has revealed that within the ocean-based renewable energy sub sector offshore wind energy is the one with the greatest contribution potential for climate change mitigation.”

Maria Damanaki, Global Managing Director for Oceans, The Nature Conservancy and Co-chair of the HLP Advisory Network

“With growing –often catastrophic– impacts from climate change and extreme weather conditions, coastal ecosystems offer a critical safety net for coastal populations providing a first line of defence and absorbing carbon up to five times more than terrestrial areas. They are also reliable sources of food and income. Protecting these ecosystems increases resilience and helps achieve multiple Sustainable Development Goals.”