

Ocean Panel Blue Paper



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

How can a healthy ocean improve human health and enhance wellbeing on a rapidly changing planet?

The ocean holds great potential in tackling global crises such as climate change and biodiversity loss, but can also help address health crises; including disease, mental health and malnutrition.

The new Ocean Panel-commissioned Blue Paper explores the intricate connections between ocean health and human health. It provides policymakers with an evidence-based menu of achievable actions for improving human health and wellbeing by equitably realising the ocean's great benefits, while effectively conserving and managing its beauty and abundance for future generations

The report explores four key areas of opportunity where the ocean can be a source of positive human health outcomes:

1. **Ocean biodiversity** can provide new medicines to fight disease, inspiration for new technologies, new materials and energy sources.
2. **Sustainable production of blue food** holds promise for ending hunger and malnutrition.
3. **Access to healthy marine environments** supports recreation and promotes mental health.
4. **Investment in the blue economy** supports economic stability and equitable outcomes in coastal communities and beyond.

Humanity cannot have a healthy, prosperous and equitable future without a healthy ocean but the impacts of climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and other stressors threaten its ability to support human life.

To address these issues, the Blue Paper identifies three key immediate actions:

1. Protect, Restore, and Manage Ocean Biodiversity:

- Advocate for ratification and implementation of global agreements such as the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework and the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.
- Collaboratively protect and sustainably manage marine biodiversity for the benefit of human wellbeing and equity.

2. Combat Climate Change and Eliminate Pollution:

- Uphold commitments to global agreements like the Paris Agreement and the UN Global Plastics Treaty.
- Focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and eliminating plastic pollution to preserve healthy marine ecosystems and food sources.

3. Improve Measurement and Support Equity:

- Integrate indicators of ocean and human health into monitoring and evaluation programmes.
- Ensure transparency and accessibility of data to inform policy-making and promote equity.

Highlighted by over 200 health journals, the current environmental crisis is also a global health emergency and demands immediate action. Cross-sectoral and cross-national partnerships are crucial to advocate for governance structures that prioritise the health of both humans and the ocean and that also address underlying political, economic, and ethical causes of planetary crises.

Immediate collaborative action is imperative to sustain and protect both ocean and human health. **Medical and ocean experts must work together to call for greater recognition of the ocean's role in human health and wellbeing and urge action to protect the ocean, before it's too late.**

