

G7 Ocean Deal Plus*

Draft

Significant progress has been made in international policy processes to achieve a sustainable ocean. The World Trade Organization's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was adopted at the 12th Ministerial Conference on 17 June 2022. It prohibits certain harmful fisheries subsidies, a major step forward for ocean sustainability, and work is under way for a second wave of negotiations. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted at the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity on 19 December 2022. It includes a target of protecting at least 30 per cent of coastal and marine areas by 2030. The text for an agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) was agreed on 4 March 2023. The First Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 28 November - 2 December, where delegates highlighted key elements of the proposed agreement to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The 2nd UN Ocean Conference was held successfully in Lisbon, Portugal from 27 June – 1 July 2022. Global leaders pledged greater action to save the ocean, adopted a political declaration, and made specific commitments for future actions. The Government of France and the Government of Costa Rica offered to co-host the 3rd UN Ocean Conference, to be held in France in June 2025, with a preparatory meeting in Costa Rica in 2024. The One Ocean Summit held in Brest, France from 10 – 12 February 2022 mobilized high level political commitments to forge international policies and facilitate actions towards achieving a sustainable ocean. The 7th Our Ocean Conference held in Palau from 13 – 14 April 2022 galvanized global concerted actions for a sustainable ocean. 410 commitments worth US\$16.35 billion were made to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of ocean and marine resources and to ensure maritime security. Leaders of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy met in

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person in New York on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly and discussed ocean-based climate solutions and financial investments. In Panama, the 8th Our Ocean Conference was held from 2 – 3 March 2023, where leaders from around the world renewed their commitment to advance actions for a sustainable ocean and pledged 341 commitments worth nearly US\$20 billion.

1. Facilitating international ocean governance

(1) Ending harmful fishery subsidies

The adoption of the binding WTO agreement on fishery subsidies was a significant milestone recognized by the international community to improve the sustainability of fishery resources by prohibiting certain harmful fisheries subsidies. The agreement adopted on 17 June 2022 prohibits the subsidies that contribute to overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, fishing on the high seas, and fishing overfished stocks. Negotiations took more than 20 years but the persistence and ingenuity of leaders and negotiators brought about the long-awaited outcome. It is the first WTO agreement with environmental sustainability at its core.

The challenge that now lies ahead is to facilitate the effective implementation and ensure global compliance with the agreement. As of 11 April 2023, 4 countries have ratified the agreement, and many more are in advanced stages of ratification. Based on the current number of WTO member states, a total of 109 ratifications is required for the agreement to enter into force. As part of the agreement, WTO members agree that they will immediately begin negotiations on additional disciplines, with the goal of notifying ministers of progress by the 13th Ministerial Conference in February 2024. To add impetus to the negotiations, the agreement states that if these comprehensive disciplines are not achieved within four years of the entry into force, the agreement will be terminated (Article 12). The agreement also establishes a fund to help developing countries meet the obligations of the agreement, with Japan as the first contributor. All WTO members, particularly major fishing countries, are urged to ratify the agreement and move expeditiously to take measures to ensure that there will be no subsidies that support overfishing and IUU fishing.

(2) Ending illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing

Ending illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains an urgent task. IUU fishing not only depletes fishery resources and undermines sustainable fisheries, but also enables human trafficking, forced labor, human rights violations, corruption and other organized crime. Fishing vessels involved in IUU fishing undermine the rule of law in ocean governance, distort maritime surveillance efforts, and threaten maritime security. The fight against IUU

fishing must be facilitated through internationally concerted action to ensure that IUU fishing is brought to an end immediately.

The Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) adopted under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is an international legally binding instrument to facilitate the fight against IUU fishing. It was adopted in November 2009 and entered into force in 2016. The number of countries that have ratified or acceded to PSMA is currently at 74, but major fishing and seafood trading countries are missing. The countries yet to accede to PSMA are encouraged to do so urgently. Technical assistance should be provided particularly for developing countries to accelerate the preparation of their accession to PSMA. The PSMA parties are also encouraged to facilitate their efforts to ensure their compliance with and enforcement of PSMA, and any bilateral and other multilateral arrangements should be further encouraged to support information exchange on IUU fishing vessels under the regional fishery management organizations (RFMO) and among the port authorities of the parties. It is also important to prohibit through bilateral and multilateral trade control measures the landing and marketing of fishery commodities and seafood products that stem from IUU fishing.

(3) Conserving marine biodiversity – The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted on 19 December 2022 provides an important set of policy objectives. Target 2 of the Framework calls for actions to ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of degraded coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration. Target 3 calls for actions to ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected, and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. As less than 8 years remain to achieve these targets, efforts need to be accelerated to take concrete measures to promote the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

(4) Conserving and sustainably using marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

The agreement on a text under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction confirms the interest of leaders and stakeholders from around the world to bolster concerted action for achieving a sustainable ocean. 60 ratifications are needed for the agreement to enter into force. A number of important matters need to be determined at the

first meeting of the Conference of Parties to the agreement. State Parties, particularly in developing countries, will need support to refine policy frameworks and enhance institutional capacity to implement the agreement. International partnership is essential for capacity development to facilitate ratification and effective implementation of the agreement.

(5) Ending plastic pollution including in the marine environment

The First Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay from 28 November - 2 December and mobilized elements essential for developing an international policy instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The second session of the INC (INC-2) will take place from 29 May - 2 June 2023 in Paris. The Ocean Plastics Charter initially adopted in Charlevoix in 2018 outlines concrete actions to eradicate plastic pollution by stating the commitment to working with the industry towards 100% reusable, recyclable and recoverable plastics by 2030. The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision adopted at G20 in 2019 sets a target to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. The European Commission adopted the zero pollution vision for 2050, including the target to reduce plastic litter at sea by 50% by 2030. It is vital that G7 members reaffirm their commitment to conclude the negotiation on plastic pollution by the end of 2024 and urgently accelerate actions towards reducing marine plastics.

(6) Restraining marine pollution

While an international instrument is being developed to eliminate marine pollution by plastics, there is still a deficiency in international policy frameworks to control and eliminate marine pollution by substances harmful to the marine environment, such as organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals and other industrial, agricultural, and household emissions. Harmful substances not only undermine the marine environment and ecosystems, but also pose threats to human health through seafood consumption. Marine pollution by nitrogen and phosphorus, that stem from the residue of agricultural fertilizer, is already exhibiting serious ecological and environmental harm in the Caribbean as outbreaks of harmful algae blooms. Harmful algae blooms are a cause of dead zones, the number of which are increasing globally at a concerning pace. Pollutants from land-based sources have been causing impacts detrimental to marine ecosystems. This invisible wave of pollution has to be addressed as soon as possible through integrated research and policy dialogues. Monitoring, research, data collection and analyses need to be promoted to increase understanding on the scope and impact of marine chemical and substance pollution. National and international policy measures need to be devised and implemented as priorities to eliminate marine pollution by hazardous substances.

(7) Blue carbon

Seagrass, mangroves, and salt marshes are types of marine and coastal ecosystems that function as carbon sinks, which provide important ecosystem services and support the global carbon cycle. These blue carbon ecosystems are the focus of a number of initiatives aimed at their conservation and sustainable management and to facilitate their restoration. Integrating blue carbon ecosystem management into the process to update nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in 2025 under the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is a key pathway to strengthen policies for their conservation. Financing of blue carbon ecosystems should be promoted in a way to safeguard nature, empower people, employ the best information, build on carbon accounting, and support sustainable development in an integrated manner.

(8) Environmental safeguarding for deep sea mineral resource exploration and development

The marine and coastal environment must be safeguarded in the exploration and development of seabed mineral and other non-living resources. With regard to the mineral and other non-living resources on the seabed in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the International Seabed Authority needs to strictly apply in its institutional framework the precautionary approach set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Any attempt to explore and develop deep sea mineral and other non-living resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction can be considered only when supported by sound scientific evidence that there will be no harmful impacts on marine ecosystems. At present, as little is still known about ecological and bio-physical features of the seabed in areas beyond national jurisdiction, it is sensible to favorably consider the proposed precautionary pause on deep sea mining in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

(9) Decarbonization of the maritime sector

It is encouraging that governments and industry are striving to achieve the target set under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for a 50% reduction in greenhouse (GHGs) emissions in the maritime sector from their 2008 levels by 2050. There is a need to renew the commitment and set a more ambitious target to facilitate more substantive reductions of GHGs emissions. Research and development and information exchange need to be facilitated to explore enabling policies, technologies, and business models for zero carbon shipping and related maritime logistics. It is vital to articulate policy measures in the 2025 NDCs of the Paris Agreement to facilitate a systemic shift of the maritime sector towards renewable energies. Medium- and small-scale freight and passenger transport by sea, particularly in developing countries including small island developing states, deserves more attention, as do areas where small scale pilot projects can demonstrate multiple merits, such

as in reducing greenhouse gases emissions, improving people's mobility, and enhancing market connectivity.

(10) Ocean science

Evidence and science based policy is critical for achieving a sustainable ocean. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) sets the policy and institutional framework to enhance the nexus of science-policy-field action. Participatory citizens' science also proves the importance of involving stakeholders in the application of scientific monitoring and approaches to resolve problems and challenges for achieving a sustainable ocean. Climate change, seawater warming, acidification, and the increased frequency and velocity of extreme climatic events require further monitoring, research, and innovative approaches. Co-benefits and synergies need to be promoted in advancing sustainable blue economies. Ocean-based renewable energies, including offshore wind power need to be promoted in a way that supports sustainable fisheries. Synergies can be explored in promoting marine ecosystem and resource conservation, sustainable use, blue tourism and community empowerment. Satoumi, a practice in Japan to promote conservation and sustainable use of coastal marine resources and improve local livelihoods, provides a useful framework. Research, pilot projects, and information exchange should be facilitated as part of the efforts to promote interdisciplinary science for achieving a sustainable ocean. Ocean science can also support human resource, leadership and capacity development.

2. Delivering on concrete actions for a sustainable ocean within G7 and beyond

Based on the aforementioned thematic and cross-cutting challenges, concrete actions shall be facilitated as renewed and continued initiatives of G7 and scaled up and extended as globally concerted actions. G7 leaders, ministers, officials and stakeholders will continue to strive to support dialogue, consensus building, and alignment of actions towards achieving a sustainable ocean.

As the new international legal and policy frameworks emerge, including the aforementioned agreements, it is critical to promote their effective implementation in an integrated and coherent manner. It is also vital to develop international institutional frameworks conducive to their effective implementation and capacity development, particularly in developing countries.

The G7 Ocean Deal Plus signifies a commitment of the G7 as a whole to pursue and collaborate on tackling challenges, delivering solutions, and achieving a sustainable ocean in light of the fact that the ocean, a global common that supports life on our planet, requires

international concerted action.

More actions are needed to forge consensus and implement a series of international policy instruments. The 3rd UN Ocean Conference in June 2025 will provide a platform to measure progress and impacts, report thereon, clarify challenges, and propose actions to pursue a sustainable ocean. Through this Ocean Deal Plus, the G7 leaders pledge that they will play leadership roles in mobilizing support, forging policy and institutional frameworks, and strengthening partnerships for internationally concerted action for achieving a sustainable ocean.