

Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean

20 November 2018, Conference Room 4, UN Conference Centre, Bangkok

Asia-Pacific is home to the most biologically diverse and productive marine ecosystems. From fisheries to marine-based tourism, our ocean is a vital source of livelihood, employment, nutrition and economic growth and is essential in balancing our climate. Marine and coastal ecosystems are the first line of defence from storms and saltwater inundation and are among the richest sources of biodiversity on our blue planet. Yet, rampant marine pollution, ocean acidification and warming, destructive fishing practices, unsustainable trade and transport, unplanned urbanization, and inadequate coastal and marine governance threaten the health of our ocean and its capacity to nurture sustainable development. Countries in Asia-Pacific are both major sources of ocean degradation and highly vulnerable to its impacts, exacerbated by climate change.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of protecting the ocean and its critical role for sustainable development. In 2017, the Ocean Conference redirected the focus to Sustainable Development Goal 14 on “Life below Water” and called for collective and urgent action¹ to halt and reverse the decline in the health and productivity of our ocean and its ecosystems and to protect and restore its resilience and ecological integrity. In response, a multitude of actors and stakeholders across Asia-Pacific committed to accelerating action for a healthy ocean, with over 600 Voluntary Commitments registered in the Pacific and Indian Ocean basins alone². The United Nations have launched multi-stakeholder Communities of Ocean Action to follow up on implementation, to catalyse new initiatives, and to facilitate collaboration and networking in support of SDG 14, inclusive of science, business and civil society.

At the halfway mark between the 2017 Ocean Conference and the next global meeting in 2020, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in close cooperation with custodian agencies of the Communities of Ocean Action and the UN Special Envoy for the Ocean are organizing the first Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean. The event invites member States, UN agencies, civil society and other ocean stakeholders to take stock of progress made on Voluntary Commitments in the region, to share lessons learned from ongoing efforts, expand the Communities, and catalyse new commitments for a healthy ocean in our region. Review of activities and Commitments will take place in the form of interactive discussions and presentations, exhibits and side events, along the themes of the Communities of Ocean Action³ and SDG 14 targets, in line with regional priorities. All stakeholders currently implementing Voluntary Commitments in ocean basins, seas and countries in Asia-Pacific or working on initiatives for a healthy ocean in the region, interested in making a Voluntary Commitment and/or joining a Community of Action are invited to register as participants by 15 November at: <https://www.unescap.org/events/asia-pacific-day-ocean>

If you are implementing a Voluntary Commitment in Asia-Pacific and are interested in joining as a presenting entity, kindly contact us at escap-edd@un.org with the subject line “Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean” and provide us with information on your Voluntary Commitment.

¹ In the declaration “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, member States agreed on the follow-up to The Ocean Conference. Find the Call for Action at: <https://oceanconference.un.org/callforaction>

² Find the registry of Voluntary Commitments under the Ocean Conference website at: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>

³ The nine Communities of Ocean Action are: Coral reefs, Implementation of international law as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Mangroves, Marine and coastal ecosystems management, Marine pollution, Ocean acidification, Scientific knowledge, research capacity development and transfer of marine technology, Sustainable blue economy, Sustainable fisheries. Find more information at: <https://oceanconference.un.org/coa>

Programme

07:30	Registration of participants	UN Conference Centre ground floor
Opening: Our region – Our Ocean (<i>Conference Room 4</i>)		
09:00 – 09:45	<p><i>Welcome remarks – The role of regional platforms and cooperation for a healthy ocean:</i> Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)</p> <p><i>Setting the scene – The Communities of Ocean Action and the role of a healthy ocean for sustainable development in Asia-Pacific:</i> Ambassador Peter Thomson, UN Special Envoy for the Ocean</p> <p><i>Progress made since the 2017 UN Ocean Conference:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Taholo Kami, Special Representative for the Ocean Pathway of the Fiji COP23 Presidency • Ms. Åsa Heden, Counsellor, Head for Regional Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden in Thailand <p><i>Video message:</i> Mr. Michael Lodge, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Community of Ocean Action on Implementation of International Law as Reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Stefanos Fotiou, Director, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP</p>	
09:45 – 10:00	<p>An Ocean Accounts Partnership: ESCAP's Voluntary Commitment to strengthen ocean governance and statistical capacity in the region Mr. Hongjoo Hahm, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP</p>	
Coffee break and photo		
Taking stock of ocean action in Asia-Pacific (<i>parallel sessions in breakout rooms</i>)		
10:15 – 12:15	<p>Session A: Marine and coastal ecosystems management, coral reefs and mangroves <i>Meeting Room A</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Paul Marshall, Reef Ecologic</p> <p><i>Setting the Scene – regional progress for healthy marine and coastal ecosystems:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COA on mangroves: Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, IUCN Regional Director • COA on coral reefs: Mr. Paul Marshall, Reef Ecologic <p><i>Presenting progress on Voluntary Commitments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the effectiveness of coastal and marine resource management: Mr. Jonathan Baines, Conservation Manager, Marine Conservation Philippines • Stopping fish bombing: Mr. George Woodman, Executive Committee, Stop Fish Bombing! • Planting 1 Million 'SeaTrees': Mr. Michael Stewart, Co-Founder, Sustainable Surf • Community and Stakeholder Based Coral Reef Restoration: Mr. Beginer Subhan, Biorock Indonesia • Towards sustainable management of marine and coastal habitats: Mr. Wannakiat Thubthimsang, Marine Resource and Ecologies Management specialist, Phuket Marine Biological Center <p><i>Plenary discussion – sharing progress, growing the Communities and catalysing action</i></p>	

<p>10:15 – 12:15</p>	<p>Session B: Marine pollution and closing the loop on plastic waste <i>Meeting Room H</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Jerker Tamelander, COBSEA Coordinator, UN Environment</p> <p><i>Setting the Scene</i> – Marine pollution in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Natalie Harms, Associate Sustainable Development Officer, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP <p><i>Presenting progress on Voluntary Commitments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) and the Regional Seas Programme for ocean-related SDGs: Mr. Jerker Tamelander, UN Environment The role of country networks and improving waste education: Ms. Nina van Toulon, Indonesian Waste Platform Reducing waste through sustainable production and consumption in the food industry: Mr. Thirach Rungruangkanokkul, Agricultural and Food Marketing Association for Asia and the Pacific and Sustainable Ocean Ambassador Trash into gold: Mr. Lim Thiam Aik, Environmental Protection Voluntary Advisor, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Tackling ghost gear: Ms. Darian McBain, Global Director of Corporate Sustainability for Thai Union Reducing plastic pollution in India: Swapan Ray, Honorary Secretary, Indian Centre for Plastic in the Environment (ICPE) <p><i>Plenary discussion – sharing progress, growing the Communities and catalysing action</i></p>
<p>Lunch and exhibits</p>	
<p>12:15 – 13:15</p>	<p>Lunch break & Walk of ideas – exhibits of Voluntary Commitments and ocean action <i>Exhibition space outside Conference Room 4</i></p>
<p>Taking stock of ocean action in Asia-Pacific (<i>parallel sessions in breakout rooms</i>)</p>	
<p>13:15 – 15:15</p>	<p>Session C: Ocean acidification, promoting scientific knowledge and accelerating action <i>Meeting Room H</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Katinka Weinberger, Chief, Environment and Development Policy Section, ESCAP</p> <p><i>Setting the Scene</i> – <i>Challenges of ocean health in the region</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COA on ocean acidification (video message): Mr. David Osborn, Director, Environment Laboratories, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) <p><i>Presenting progress on Voluntary Commitments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop research capacity and transfer of marine technology in the West Pacific: Mr. Somkiat Khokiattiwong, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources of Thailand, Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON) Executive Council and Vice Chair of IOC-UNESCO Ocean Literacy Campaign in Bangladesh: Mr. Mohammad Muslem Uddin, Associate Professor of Oceanography, President of Blue Green Foundation Bangladesh Blue Solutions Partnership: Mr. Jerker Tamelander, UN Environment Programme Accelerating action for SDG 14: Ms. Caridad Canales Davila, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Assessment and Conservation of Blue Carbon Ecosystems and their Services in the Coral Triangle (BlueCARES): Dr. Sakaguchi Noriaki, Senior Advisor, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) <p><i>Plenary discussion – sharing progress, growing the Communities and catalysing action</i></p>
13:15 – 15:15	<p>Session D: Sustainable fisheries and blue economy <i>Meeting Room A</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Cassandra De Young, Fishery Planning Analyst, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)</p> <p><i>Setting the Scene – Sustainable fishery and use of the ocean in the region:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COA on sustainable fisheries: Ms. Cassandra De Young, FAO <p><i>Presenting progress on Voluntary Commitments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Oceans and Fisheries Partnership: Ms. Cristina Vélez Srinivasan, Project Manager, Regional Environment Office of the USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia Networking of Islands for Sustainable Oceans: Masanori Kobayashi, Research Fellow, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation Promoting Gender Equality in Sustainable Fisheries Management: Ms. Milika Sobey, Chairperson, Women in Fisheries Network, Fiji Initiatives Toward Sustainable Development of Fisheries in ASEAN Region: Mr. Kom Silapajarn, Secretary General, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) A Holistic Solution for the Eradication of Destructive Fishing Practices in South-East Asia: Mr. Adrian Chan, Founder & Director, Reef Defenders Combating IUU Fishing: Mr. Adisorn Promthep, Director General, Department of Fisheries, Thailand <p><i>Plenary discussion – sharing progress, growing the Communities and catalysing action</i></p>
Coffee break	
Progress made and action needed in Asia-Pacific (Conference Room 4)	
15:30 – 16:45	<p>Tracking progress on Voluntary Commitments in the region & growing the Communities - Outcomes of parallel sessions <i>Conference Room 4</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Paul Marshall, Reef Ecologic</p> <p><i>Rapporteurs of Sessions A, B, C and D</i></p>
16:45 – 17:30	<p>Closing: Accelerating action in the region <i>Conference Room 4</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Stefanos Fotiou, Director, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP</p> <p><i>Regional review and call for action:</i> Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ambassador Thomson</p> <p><i>Toward 2020 and beyond:</i> Mr. Francisco Vaz Patto, Ambassador of Portugal in Thailand</p> <p><i>Leading the way in Asia-Pacific:</i> Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP</p>
Networking cocktail reception (outside Conference Room 4)	