

STATEMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING AND CONSERVING MARINE AND COASTAL BIODIVERSITY

This is a statement led by Australia and Norway, delivered on behalf of 37 countries.

The planet has one ocean. It covers 70% of the Earth.

The ocean and marine and coastal biodiversity are essential components to all life on Earth. They underpin the systems that provide us food and medicines. They provide us drinking water and stimulate our economies. And most important of all, they regulate our climate and store vast amounts of carbon.

For some of us, the ocean and marine biodiversity are also part of our national identity, culture, health, and wellbeing. It has special significance with many cultures of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

There is an enormous amount of action being undertaken across the world, by governments, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, by industry and communities to maintain biodiversity. Unfortunately, our response has been insufficient to keep pace with the scale of change upon us.

The triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and loss of biodiversity is threatening the health of our ocean. We call for strong action to address the global and local stressors that contribute to the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity.

We understand the urgency and scale of the challenges facing our ocean. We are committed to leading efforts to solve them – at home, with our ocean neighbours and globally.

To maintain the benefits of the ecosystem services provided by the ocean, we must increase actions to limit sea level rises and temperatures, to reverse ecosystem degradation, and to stop polluting our ocean.

Reducing the pressures on our ocean is essential to ensure it is healthy and sustainable for future generations, but some of these pressures are beyond the capacity of an individual country to resolve.

Recognising the importance of marine and coastal biodiversity, and the connections between coastal and open ocean ecosystems, is one of the key cross-cutting elements of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. It is critical we have strong goals and targets on marine and coastal biodiversity, including to protect and conserve at least 30% of the global ocean.

The health of the ocean is a common concern of humankind. A healthy ocean will benefit all life on Earth. Sustainable management across all marine and coastal areas, including conservation and sustainable use, is dependent on science, knowledge, and good practices.

We must build up, share, and synthesize knowledge on marine biodiversity, the effects of climate change on ecosystems, and on the adaptation and resilience of marine ecosystems.

Together – with a strong coordinated effort we will give the ocean the proper attention it deserves and come up with effective actions and solutions.

We are ready to do more, and welcome others to join us in striving for strong next steps for marine protection at COP15, and onwards to COP16, that we can take together.

List of countries supporting the statement

1. Australia
2. Austria
3. Belgium
4. Canada
5. Chile
6. Colombia
7. Cook Islands
8. Costa Rica
9. Croatia
10. Denmark
11. Dominican Republic
12. Finland
13. France
14. Germany
15. Ireland
16. Israel
17. Italy
18. Luxembourg
19. Maldives
20. Mexico
21. Monaco
22. New Zealand
23. Niue
24. Norway
25. Palau
26. Peru
27. Philippines
28. Portugal
29. Samoa
30. Slovenia
31. Spain
32. Saint Lucia
33. Sweden
34. Tonga
35. Trinidad and Tobago
36. United Kingdom
37. United States of America