

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of World Oceans Day**

8 June 2022

Each year, between mid-May and early June, UNESCO celebrates three international days focused on subjects that are as vital as they are complementary. This is an opportunity to jointly consider the three systemic pillars of climate change: biodiversity, the environment and the ocean – the theme of this world day.

The ocean connects, sustains and supports us all. However, its health is at a tipping point. We need to take urgent and collective action to better understand, preserve and revitalize this global common good, as well as to use ocean knowledge to address our planet's most pressing challenges.

This is the aim of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, launched in 2021 and coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. What we do or do not achieve during this Decade will have far-reaching consequences for our planet's 'blue lung'.

The United Nations Ocean Decade is now underway and has given rise to hundreds of innovative Ocean Decade Actions to generate a veritable ocean knowledge revolution and revitalize the ocean through collective action.

Today, UNESCO is endorsing an additional wave of 44 Ocean Decade Actions, including four transformative programmes addressing issues of marine pollution, ecosystem resilience and the ocean-climate nexus, as well as projects and contributions of in-kind and financial support bringing us closer to creating the ocean we want. These Ocean Decade Actions now total over 180, reaching every continent and ocean basin, fostering a global network of change for good.

At the One Ocean Summit organized in February, UNESCO contributed to this objective by expressing its ambition to galvanize a collective commitment towards mapping the seabed by 2030. Moreover, we have presented new educational resources for ocean education.

In this context, World Oceans Day is an opportunity to celebrate collective action, now more than ever. On this day, we call not only on individuals, but also on governments, scientists, private companies, civil societies and local communities to join this global effort to manage the ocean for our common safety, well-being and prosperity.

UNESCO will maintain its commitment to achieving this common goal, beginning at the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference the Governments of Portugal and Kenya will host this month. We will convene the first in-person meeting of the Ocean Decade Alliance, including government, philanthropy and industry leaders who have put their energy and efforts into ensuring the Ocean Decade is a success.

Above all, on World Oceans Day, let us remember that we depend on the ocean, the blue lung of the planet, as much as it depends on us. The ocean was the source of life on Earth more than four billion years ago, but it is above all, on this Day, our present as well as our future. It is up to us to protect this common good.