

**Statement by Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the
Convention on Biological Diversity on World Oceans Day**

8 June 2025

“Blue planet”, the fond monicker for Earth, is a tribute to the ocean. The vast blue expanse wrapping around continents sustains life, regulates the global climate, feeds billions, supports livelihoods, and inspires cultures.

On World Oceans Day let us not take the ocean for granted. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste is taking a hefty toll on marine and coastal ecosystems and, as a result, on all of us. “We must sustain what sustains us,” as the Secretary-General of the United Nations reminds us.

Implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)-- the world’s masterplan to halt and reverse biodiversity loss-- is part of the global endeavour to save our ocean. The 23 targets of the KMGBF apply to all biomes, including the ocean. Their implementation requires transformative change—humanity’s ticket to harmony with nature.

A healthy, thriving ocean constitutes one of the most eloquent expressions of harmony with nature. We at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have long emphasized the importance of protecting and sustainably using marine life, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We look forward to the entry into force of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement. Cooperation offers an opportunity to further our common goals for the ocean by building on the substantial experience that Parties have gained within the framework of the CBD. This includes the important work on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), the subject of a groundbreaking decision adopted at COP 16 in Cali, not far from Colombia’s Pacific coast.

EBSAs offer a wealth of information that can guide science-based decisions on planning, management and research, and are essential to so many targets of the KMGBF, including Target 3, known widely as the “30x30” target.

Today is a good day to renew the call for accelerated implementation of the KMGBF. The world needs to work harder on turning commitments into action. Marine Protected Areas are a case in point. Too often, they are reduced to “paper parks” or turned into fortresses banishing people. Conservation must be inclusive. Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and coastal stakeholders must be part of it. MPAs and indeed the implementation of the KMGBF as a whole must embody a whole-of-society approach.

As the UN Ocean Conference gets underway this week in Nice, let us leverage a renewed commitment to the ocean to fulfil the vision of the Global Biodiversity Framework: a world living in harmony with nature.