

# 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference

## Outcome report

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FORUM

The high-level 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC), co-hosted by the governments of France and Costa Rica, convened on 9-13 June in Nice, France under the theme “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean.”

This event, which takes place every three years, supports the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14), “Life below water” and is the most important global event to advance ocean sustainability.

With over 10,000 participants accredited, more than double from previous UNOCs, and 65 heads of state in attendance, this year’s conference marked a record number of leaders uniting to discuss ocean sustainability.

As the conference wrapped up with this momentum, the outcome document – [Nice Ocean Action Plan](#) – calls for accelerated action through a concise, consensus-driven political declaration backed by a comprehensive suite of voluntary commitments to conserve and sustainably use the ocean in support of SDG 14.



The conference was anticipated by three special events: respectively One Ocean Science Congress, Coastal Resilience Summit and the Blue Economy and Finance Forum (BEFF). Notably, the BEFF, hosted by the Principality of Monaco and supported by the World Economic Forum in the Steering Committee, was attended by **1,800 participants** representing 100 countries and over 1,000 organizations.

The World Economic Forum’s (Forum) objectives for the event were to advance the transition to a regenerative blue economy by creating opportunities for private-sector engagement, highlighting key ocean innovations and financing opportunities, and ensuring a broad communications and media outreach to amplify the conference’s impact.

This report outlines key developments throughout UNOC, and contributions from the Forum and Friends of Ocean Action (FOA), and signals opportunities for private sector engagement and public-private collaboration in the ocean space going forward.

## All Hands on Deck for Ocean Action

Achieving global ocean recovery requires an all hands on deck approach. From small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to innovators and large multinational corporations, business actors were positioned not just as supporters but as core partners in delivery, and were called to align operations, investments and disclosures with ocean sustainability targets.

### Private Sector Participation

The Forum contributed to successfully bringing to this UN Ocean Conference the largest number of businesses across blue economy industries as part of its role as the official umbrella organization for private sector participation. This also marked unprecedented participation from CEOs and Chairpersons who prioritized Nice for their 2025 engagements.

The regenerative blue economy is no longer a side conversation. Over 120 companies across sectors attended UNOC and BEFF, spanning energy, transportation and logistics, ports, shipping, as well as automotive, telecommunications, consumer goods, tourism, and financial services, among others.



Throughout the conference, the private sector showcased leadership and action, emerging as a key force to support effective implementation and why this makes for good business.

## World Economic Forum Business Hub

Envisaged as a dynamic collaborative and networking space to add value to private sector participation, The Forum Business Hub welcomed over 800 participants across 25 sessions over a 4-day programme featuring transitioning business practices, directly and credibly investing in nature, building cross-sector partnerships and leveraging science as the backbone of action to accelerate the transition to a regenerative blue economy.

Offering high quality conversations to highlight solutions and enhancing public-private collaborations, the Forum Business Hub brought together leaders across maritime industries and sectors like energy, logistics and finance, with leadership from civil society, conservation, science and government to shape the future of the ocean economy.

[The Global Future Council on the Regenerative Blue Economy](#), launched earlier this year, also met at UNOC and solidified ambition to advancing thought leadership to unlock new economic opportunities and build resilience by bringing together leaders across sectors.

The role of philanthropy was also emphasized, both as a catalytic funder and strategic convener. Institutional frameworks for risk-sharing and public-private alignment were widely recognized as crucial to scaling ocean-positive investment.

“ **There can be no healthy planet without a healthy ocean, and the ocean's health is currently measurably in decline. Reversing this decline requires bold, determined action from all sectors, including the private sector. The Third UN Ocean Conference saw unprecedented private sector engagement, thanks in large part to our partnership with the World Economic Forum to mobilise business leadership for ocean action.** ” - Peter Thomson, United Nations Special Envoy for the Oceans, Co-Chair of Friends of Ocean Action

## The Startup Reef: UNOC's innovation space

In parallel, the Startup Reef—led by 1000 Ocean Startups and hosted in the Green Zone "La Baleine"—was the prime ocean innovation space. The Reef delivered a high-impact programme featuring 50+ technical innovation showcases, 30+ sessions on investment, and global community building events. With over 100,000 visitors to the Green Zone, the Reef offered a public-facing platform for innovation and investment to meet.

“ **In several cases, meeting in-person with individuals we had previously only engaged with online helped accelerate progress and clarify next steps. It genuinely felt like new doors were opened.** ” – Klaartje Schade, Co-Founder of Mwani Zanzibar.

Participating entrepreneurs and investors reported tangible traction with partners and funders, reinforcing the value of visibility and proximity to decision-makers.



## Unlocking Capital for a Regenerative Blue Economy

Finance emerged as a core theme across the conference, reinforcing the urgent need to close the persistent blue finance gap—particularly for developing countries and coastal communities. The message was clear: the tools and solutions exist; the next step is scaling them through coordinated investment, stronger institutional frameworks, and delivery at pace. Ocean finance is maturing—moving beyond aspiration toward implementation. UNOC demonstrated that the architecture for scaling capital exists; the next step is delivery.

“ **The commitments at BEFF and UNOC 2025 demonstrate that capital, policy, and business can converge to secure the ocean's future—a foundation for sustainable growth worldwide. We must build on this momentum.** ” – Sebastian Buckup, Managing Director, Centre for Nature and Climate, World Economic Forum.



## Blue Economy and Finance Forum

The Blue Economy and Finance Forum (BEFF) served as a key platform to showcase progress towards accelerating ocean investment. A total of \$8.7 billion was committed to be deployed over the next five years into a regenerative and sustainable blue economy – of which €1 billion has already been deployed or is investment-ready in 2025.

Multiple sessions and announcements highlighted evolving mechanisms such as blended finance structures, nature-linked insurance models, and market development for blue carbon and biodiversity credits.

In a landmark move for regional development, the Development Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), revealed a tripling of its Blue Economy Fund by announcing \$2.5 billion of new money. The announcement – led and fully-shaped by CAF – builds on a collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the World Resources Institute and was the largest commitment made at BEFF.

## Friends of Ocean Action at UNOC

Throughout the week, members of the Friends of Ocean Action community were actively engaged across UNOC with strong cohesion, shared purpose, and a stronger-than-ever commitment to collaboration across sectors and regions.

The community came together in official events and informal gatherings during UNOC with a clear emphasis on shifting from ambition to action. A central milestone was the launch of the 30x30 Ocean Action Plan, a strategic roadmap developed by Friends of Ocean Action and partners to support effective and equitable marine protection by 2030.



Friends of Ocean Action's messaging and ambitions were echoed by the political convergence UNOC underscored, with countries rallying around shared priorities for scaling ocean action. Momentum on the global 30x30 target—framed as essential for climate, biodiversity, and equity—was matched by tangible governance advances, including 19 new ratifications of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement (BBNJ) during UNOC and growing alignment to bring the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement into force. These developments signaled a step-change in enabling conditions for delivery. By reducing regulatory risk and improving institutional clarity, stronger governance creates space for credible, investable solutions—such as marine protected areas, biodiversity credits, and traceable seafood systems—that can align environmental protection with economic opportunity.

## World Economic Forum key launches and announcements

The World Economic Forum's ocean-related collaborations, initiatives and announcement were widely covered during the first two weeks of June alone. Coverage included leading global outlets such as [TIME](#), [Forbes](#), [Associated Press](#), [Straits Times](#), [The Economist](#), [UN News](#), BBC podcasts and more. This contributed to a global surge in media attention for the ocean.

Here are some prominent announcements and launches led by the Forum:

### #BackBlue Ocean Finance Commitment Surges to \$3.45 Trillion in Assets Under Management

[#BackBlue Ocean Finance Commitment](#), backed by the Forum and ORRAA, grew to \$3.45 trillion in assets under management. With new entrants like BNP Paribas, Eurazeo, and Mirova joining established leaders like Deutsche Bank, this coalition strengthens the integration of regenerative ocean priorities into finance and insurance decision-making.

### Business Community Champions Ocean Sustainability: Business Call to Action

Convened by the Forum in collaboration with several business-orientated partners, [this declaration](#) was endorsed by over 90 businesses representing over \$600 billion in turnover and 2 million employees.

### GlobalPlastics Action Partnership Announces 20 Biodiversity Small Fund Winners

[The Global Plastic Action Partnership \(GPAP\)](#) showcased real-world impact for inclusive and data driven plastic solutions, announcing 20 winners of a small fund supported by Global Affairs Canada.

### WEF, NPI and ORRAA announce partnership measuring ocean positive outcomes

The partners are working together to establish scientifically credible, [practical and standardized state of nature metrics](#) for marine ecosystems and key performance indicators for the regenerative blue economy.

### New Report: Making Waves in the Regenerative and Sustainable Blue Economy

The Forum co-launched a [new report](#) written in collaboration with ORRAA, Builders Vision, and Katapult Ocean, highlighting 45+ investment-ready opportunities spanning funds and direct solutions in ocean industries.

### New Report: 30x30 Ocean Action Plan

UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ambassador Peter Thomson, announced [The 30x30 Ocean Action Plan](#) - convened by Friends of Ocean Action in collaboration with Blue Action Fund, Blue Marine Foundation, Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy, Mercuria, Minderoo Foundation, Oceano Azul Foundation, and with the strategic support of UNEP and IUCN.

### New Report: Advancing China's Sustainable Blue Economy - Building Strong Policy Foundations for Ocean Accounting and Blue Finance

Jointly-led by Friends of Ocean Action and AVPN, with substantial contributions from experts across multiple organizations, [the report](#) highlights the urgent need to transform China's ocean economy by integrating sustainability into national policy frameworks, strengthening ocean governance, and scaling blue finance to ensure long-term resilience.

### New Website: Momentum Pulse

The 1000 Ocean Startups launched the [Momentum Pulse](#) platform, a digital dashboard mapping real time start-up activity, investment flows, and ecosystem growth across sectors and geographies.