



Marrakech
Partnership



The Ocean Pathway

A Strategy for the Ocean into COP23

Towards an Ocean Inclusive UNFCCC Process

Note: this is an evolving document compiled from consultations by the COP23 Fiji Presidency with interested parties and partners and provides a guideline for discussion during COP23 and will be updated with the launch of the Ocean Pathway Partnership.

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We recognise that our ocean covers three quarters of our planet, connects our populations and markets, and forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage. It supplies nearly half the oxygen we breathe, absorbs over a quarter of the carbon dioxide we produce, plays a vital role in the water cycle and the climate system, and is an important source of our planet's biodiversity and of ecosystem services. It contributes to sustainable development and sustainable ocean-based economies, as well as to poverty eradication, food security and nutrition, maritime trade and transportation, decent work and livelihoods (UN Ocean Conference Call for Action, June 2017)

1. Objectives

- a.** A COP23 Presidency ocean initiative that will embody the important relationship between the Ocean and Climate Change and launch an Ocean Pathway to ensure the ocean is an integral part of our UNFCCC process by 2020.
- b.** Enhance the opportunity to support ocean health and manage critical coastal and marine ecosystems from current and emerging climate change funding under the UNFCCC.
- c.** Support existing priorities that affect and are impacted by ocean and climate including; sustainable transport, cities and human settlements, population displacement and migration, coastal infrastructure, marine ecosystem services, ocean food security, human health and ocean energy.
- d.** Strengthen mobilization and cooperation of the UNFCCC Parties for the conservation and enhancement of the resilience of the ocean for the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- e.** Ensure the inclusion of appropriate climate mitigation and adaptation actions derived from the ocean, including from coastal and marine nature-based solutions, into NDCs
- f.** Link existing ocean activities and partnerships within the ocean pathway and to the evolving role of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Ocean.

2. Background

Fiji's presidency is a voice for the most vulnerable countries that include small island and coastal states that are literally on the nexus of the ocean and climate change. A healthy ocean is critical to the economic, cultural and social wellbeing of vulnerable countries and a significant threat to their survival with the impacts of climate change including sea level rise, acidification and intense storms and weather patterns compromising their future.

Fiji and Sweden co-chaired the first UN Ocean Conference in June 2017 and the Call for Action underlined the urgency for a healthy ocean and the critical relationship between the ocean and climate. Action for a healthy ocean is action on climate change and vice versa. It is imperative that Fiji as President for COP23 ensures an effective and cohesive home for the ocean in the UNFCCC process.

Fiji as a Pacific Small Island Developing State (SIDS) also recognizes the significance of their role as Large Ocean States with more than 90 percent of their national boundaries made up of ocean. Fiji is also a member of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS) in the United Nations. While SIDS representatives have held important positions within the UNFCCC process, Fiji is the first Island nation to hold the Presidency of the Climate Change COP. Embedding the ocean in the UNFCCC is an imperative for all SIDS and coastal states and Fiji's Presidency of COP a formidable opportunity.

There is a consensus on the important relationship between the ocean and climate change in terms of management of carbon, the absorption of heat and regulation of global weather patterns. There is serious concern on the current degradation of ocean health and the impact of and on climate change. Climate change has negative impacts on the ocean in terms of acidification, warming, rising sea levels and de oxygenation. In addition to climate change, human induced changes threaten ocean health including pollution, habitat destruction and over harvesting. Action for healthy ocean and climate change is imperative to reduce the multiple stresses and threats to our ocean in regulating climate. The Fiji Presidency provides the opportunity to draw attention and momentum for this effort and urgently address the adverse impacts or threats that impair the ocean's role as climate regulator.

Finally, the current acknowledgement of the ocean in the Paris Agreement falls under the recognition of the important role of ecosystem services to climate change and its role as a carbon sink. The ocean is the most critical of all natural ecosystems for our climate due to a combination of its composition and scale. There is no solution to global climate change without action on the world's ocean. A special case for a healthy ocean and climate is established under this Fiji Presidency.

3. Current Climate Change and Ocean Initiatives

There are multiple activities and partnerships in the Action Space of the UNFCCC related to the ocean. Many are part of several alliances and coalitions that have been setup in the last 5 years for a more comprehensive approach to insert ocean in the UNFCCC process. The Ocean Pathway will connect with the following broader initiatives to ensure cohesion and effectiveness.

- a. The Ocean & Climate Initiatives Alliance was established from an alliance of non-governmental organizations and research institutes, with support from the UNESCO IOC in June 2014 during the World Ocean day.
- b. The International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification is an alliance between Countries, States, Private Sector to deal with acidification of our ocean by promoting understanding, awareness and action.
- c. "Because the Ocean" Declarations signed respectively at COP 21 by 22 countries (including Fiji) and at COP22 pledged to emphasize important role of the Ocean for the climate by supporting the elaboration of an IPCC Special Report on the Ocean, to promote a High-Level UN Conference on Oceans and Seas, and develop an Ocean action plan under the UNFCCC.
- d. The Global Ocean Forum, the International Ocean Commission (IOC) / UNESCO and partners launched a Strategic Action Roadmap on Ocean and Climate by 2021 and committing to address major areas of concern such as ensuring that climate financing flows into ocean-based solutions for mitigation, adaptation, capacity development, among other important elements.

The concept of an Ocean Pathway in the UNFCCC will work with the above initiatives and will require continued advocacy to make the linkage and guarantee long term outcomes. The strategy will require the formation of a coordinating entity to link to the key people in each network.

4. Significant Global Activities Outside the UNFCCC

Globally, activities and initiatives for action for healthy ocean at all levels are required, especially with the strong scientific justification on the urgent need for actions on ocean health. It is important that Fiji continue to ensure alignment with and implementation of the following:

- a. 2017 Call for Action from the UN Ocean Conference.
- b. Predicted 2018 launch of an Intergovernmental Conference on an implementing agreement under UNCLOS on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

- c. Ocean and climate related actions with global conventions such as the CBD, the RAMSAR convention and others.
- d. Other sector-focussed initiatives affecting the health of ocean including fisheries, sustainable shipping, sustainable coastal cities and settlement and pollution amongst others.

5. COP 23 Ocean Key Activities and Strategy

5.1 Establish an Ocean Pathway Partnership (OPP)

To implement an effective pathway that will strengthen the role of the ocean in the UNFCCC while maintaining the neutrality and effectiveness of the Presidency, it will be critical to form a partnership of countries and stakeholders that can lead on various opportunities where the Presidency role is limited. The partnership also ensures momentum continues beyond COP23 and into full implementation with the rollout of the Paris Agreement. The Ocean Pathway Partnership is to include:

- i. Representatives of parties and stakeholders
- ii. Co-chair between Fiji and a developed coastal state.
- iii. Observer organizations, CSO, private sector, academic and sub regional governments.
- iv. Established ocean and climate alliances, coalitions and platforms.
- v. 1-3 key donor partners that will fund OPP and activities
- vi. Co-chairs and partners to establish an OPP Steering Committee that will be responsible for coordination of the OPP and special teams / groups as needed.

5.1 COP Political or Negotiation Space

Introduce a COP23 Presidency led initiative on the Ocean that will:

- i. Recognize the 2017 UN Ocean Conference Call for Action
- ii. Call for the need to establish the role of a healthy ocean and climate change within the UNFCCC process by 2020 including the possibility of special consideration in 2019 with the SDG 14 priority and IPCC report on ocean.
- iii. Ensure the establishment of the Ocean Pathway through the UNFCCC and the grand Ocean Pathway Partnership that will drive this initiative.

This is an opportunity for a “gentle landing” of the ocean and climate change issue into the negotiation space and will be part of the COP23 legacy. Flagging the Ocean Pathway for 2019 gives notice and allows for 2 years of advocacy and time to determine effective engagement under the UNFCCC. It also allows consideration for possible inclusion in existing agenda items. The Ocean Pathway will also

- i. Create a window for the ocean within the existing financial mechanisms of the UNFCCC to ensure climate change funding can support the adaptation work needed for healthy ocean.
- ii. Consider effective engagement in the Facilitative Dialogue.
- iii. Other activities as defined by the OPP.

5.2 Coordination on Action Agenda

The action agenda has had several initiatives on the ocean over the past 5 years. It is critical that the Ocean Pathway pulls together the key alliances to ensure strong common outcomes. Fiji and the Pacific have provided leadership on the Sustainable Shipping and the Sustainable Fisheries agendas; COP23 provides an opportune time for added momentum to ensure increased action. With the sustainable cities and settlements networks, Fiji will be able to lead on the special role for “Coastal Cities, Towns and Communities” as their contribution to ICLEI and other urban networks to underline that coastal cities and towns sit on the nexus of climate and ocean and are severely impacted by both. Coastal cities, in dealing with climate change, should have strong commitments to emissions reductions, adaptation and ocean health. Actions to include:

- i. Align the Ocean Pathway with the existing ocean alliances / coalitions in the action space including the Ocean & Climate Initiatives Alliance, the Ocean Acidification Alliance, the “Because the Ocean” initiative and the GOF/IOC/partners commitments that call for overall action on the ocean across the UNFCCC.
- ii. Ensure alignment with the Marrakech Partnership – especially key ocean activities.
- iii. Strengthen the Sustainable Shipping / Transport Agenda both with leadership from shipping CEOs and countries working with IMO on decarbonisation of shipping.
- iv. Strengthen engagement of SIDS Cities, Towns and Settlements in global networks with a special emphasis on Coastal Cities, Towns and Settlements and their role in the climate and ocean nexus.
- v. Support initiatives to control run off and pollution from agriculture and other land-based activities that impact the ocean.
- vi. Support case for significant restoration of natural ecosystems and ecosystem based adaptation.
- vii. Support initiatives for improving fisheries management and restoration of ocean ecosystems.
- viii. Support initiatives related to the protection and empowerment of coastal communities facing climate change-related migration, displacement and planned relocation.

5.3 Engaging key Donor Partners

The work of the Ocean Pathway Partnership over the first two years to build support, strengthen key priorities, and deliver on overall objectives will include research, technical expert meetings, and convening critical parties as needed. Funding is required to support activities and define possibilities for further engagement on an agenda item or work programme by 2019.

5.4 Continue Engagement in Other Critical Ocean Partnerships Outside of the UNFCCC

The Ocean Pathway Partnership will continue to link with existing global and regional initiatives including;

- i. UN Ocean Summit Call for Action - coordination with UN Special Envoy for the Ocean on the implementation of the 2030 SDG 14 agenda.

- ii. UN Convention on the Law of the Sea - predicted state of adoption of a new treaty for conservation and sustainable use of High Seas Biodiversity in 2018 which will become a focus by all interested parties for implementation post 2018.
- iii. Convention for Biodiversity, RAMSAR, etc.

6. Implementation Activities to Date

6.1 Pacific Islands Leaders Forum in Apia, Samoa – September 2017

Overall results of Pacific Islands Forum Meeting include the following

- i. Endorsement with full support for Fiji's COP23 leadership in communique.
- ii. Recommendation for a High-Level Ocean and Climate Coalition to be setup to ensure full implementation of Ocean Pathway into UNFCCC.
- iii. Pacific Islands Leaders support Fiji's COP23 Presidency.

6.2 UN General Assembly and Climate Week – September 2017

- i. Pacific SIDS leaders engaged on Ocean Pathway and way forward.
- ii. Initial discussions with G77 Chair and key partners.
- iii. Concept socialized with key networks and groups

6.3 Pre-Cop Nadi; 16 – 18 October

Pre-Launch of the Ocean Pathway Partnership with Fiji, Norway, Sweden, Palau and the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner. The pre-COP included parallel sessions on Sustainable maritime transport, the special case for coastal cities, settlements and islands, and ocean policy. Key countries and organizations expressed interest in a formal launching.

6.4 COP 23 - Bonn

- i. Fiji to introduce Ocean Pathway in negotiation space with COP23 Presidency.
- ii. Introduction of Co-chair with Fiji and launch of Ocean Pathway Partnership (OPP)
- iii. Establishment of OPP Steering committee
- iv. Special Ocean Pathway Side Events;
 - a. 10 November 13.20 – 14.20: Ocean Pathway Introduction – Fiji Pavilion
 - b. 16 November 15.45 – 18.00: Launching of Ocean Pathway Partnership
 - c. Introduction of Ocean Pathway in various events by partners

6.5 Post COP23 activities in 2018

- i. Host roundtable on Sustainable Transport / shipping
- ii. Host roundtable on Coastal Cities, Towns and Settlements with PSIDS and invited Pacific Rim cities
- iii. Host roundtable on climate and ocean financing opportunities
- iv. Host Ocean Pathway planning meeting for COP 24
- v. Other activities as determined by OPP