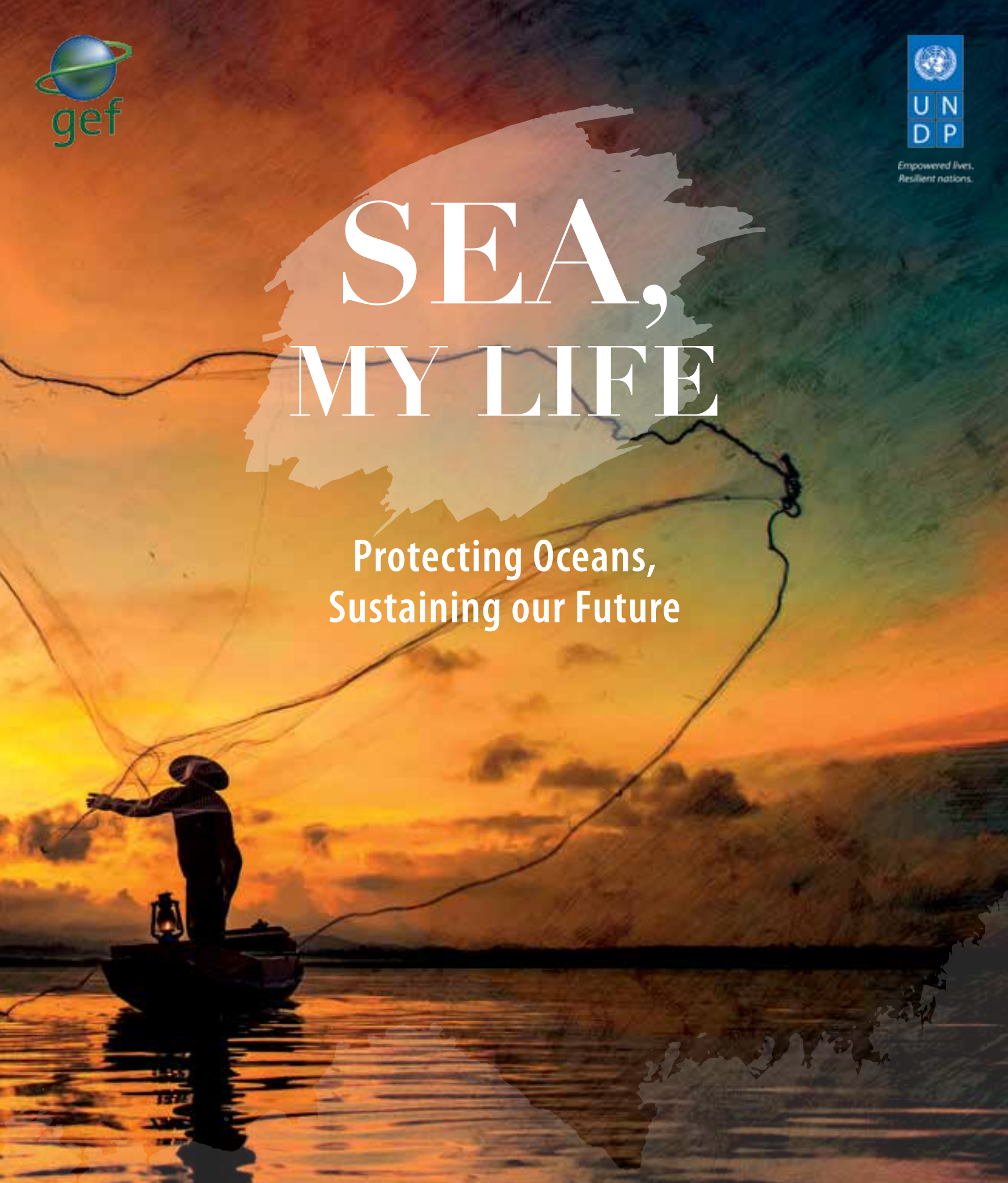




Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

SEA, MY LIFE

Protecting Oceans,
Sustaining our Future



SEA, MY LIFE

Our Voyage to Marine Protected Areas



Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Chile: Juan Fernández Archipelago | 9. Jordan: Aqaba Marine Park |
| 2. Peru: Guano Islands and Capes National Park | 10. Turkey: Special Environment Protected Areas |
| 3. Galápagos Marine Reserve | 11. India: Malvan and Coringa Sanctuaries |
| 4. Colombia: Marine Protected Areas | 12. Maldives: Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve, Hanifaru Marine Protected Area |
| 5. Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site | 13. Malaysia: Seribuat Archipelago |
| 6. Namibia: Namibia Islands | 14. Philippines: Verde Island Passage |
| 7. Comoros Islands: Coelacanth National Park | 15. Tonga: Fanga'uta Lagoon Marine Reserve |
| 8. Seychelles: Aldabra Atoll World Heritage Site | 16. Russia: Commander Islands Biosphere Reserve |



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UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations. www.undp.org

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, is a catalyst for action on the environment – and much more. Through its strategic investments, the GEF works with partners to tackle the planet's biggest environmental issues. www.thegef.org

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H.E. Mr Peter Thomson,
President of the 71st Session
of the UN General Assembly

Message of Support

The Ocean is the critical life force of our planet, giving us water, oxygen and food generated by complex ecosystems. The diversity of its contributions range from providing shipping lanes to being the planet's main carbon store. As well as being a massive source of livelihoods, the Ocean is a reservoir of cultural values, and more than ever before, the global community has begun to realize the enormous value of Ocean's remarkable ecosystem, seeing it as perhaps our single greatest natural asset.

Despite this realization, and the efforts of civil society, science, business and governments around the globe, the Ocean is beset by a plethora of woes which have caught it in a cycle of decline. Marine pollution is cluttering the Ocean and choking marine life, with immense gyres of garbage circulating out in the high seas. Hypoxic dead zones are growing along our coasts. Overfishing and illegal fisheries activities are threatening the sustainability of fish stocks, along with the livelihoods of people who depend on them. Poorly-planned coastal developments are driving loss of critical habitats such as mangroves and life-sustaining estuaries, while the escalating impacts of climate change are causing multiple problems, including increased coral bleaching, coastal erosion and rising water temperatures, leading in turn to rising sea levels.

But mine is a message of hope – it has to be, for I am a grandfather. I believe that every human-induced problem has a human-led solution. This is one of the reasons I place so much hope in the Sustainable Development Goals as they provide humanity with a universal masterplan for a sustainable future. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 provides a roadmap to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean and its resources, and, if successfully implemented, SDG 14 will inevitably help deliver on many of the other SDGs.

This publication, *Sea, my Life: Protecting Oceans, Sustaining our Future*, showcases a selection of case studies that highlight such proven approaches, with a focus on strategies for establishing, expanding and enhancing the effectiveness of marine protected areas. Drawing on the significant body of work financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its many partners, this publication demonstrates how marine protected areas play a critical role in protecting fragile marine and coastal habitats. Marine protected areas are vital to boosting biodiversity and thereby the people who depend on them, thus improving ecosystem health, securing sources of food, making shorelines more resilient, and providing income, jobs and a sustainable future for our grandchildren. SDG 14 is one of the most ambitious of the Sustainable Development Goals, but is also eminently achievable.

A stand-out message emerging from this publication is that we can achieve much when people and institutions from all sectors of society commit to working in partnership to implement integrated and innovative solutions. It is through progressive partnerships that we will turn the tide to secure a healthy Ocean and reverse that cycle of decline towards a time of conservation and sustainable utilisation of our planet's precious resources.

H.E. Mr Peter Thomson

Foreword

About half of the world's population – some 3 billion people – live within 200 kilometres of a coastline, and by 2025, that figure is likely to double. The high concentration of people in coastal regions has produced many economic benefits, but the combined impacts of rapid population growth, coastal development, local and global demand for resources, increased pollution, and climate change, are threatening the marine and coastal ecosystems that provide these development benefits.

Recognizing the critical need for global action to ensure the sustainability of our oceans, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) invests heavily in efforts to strengthen ocean governance and protection. As a principal implementing agency of the GEF, UNDP is working through strategic partnerships to support the implementation in developing countries of a variety of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral tools and approaches to manage activities in oceans, seas and coasts in a more sustainable way, and to integrate improved governance and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems with sustainable economic development, climate change risk management and poverty reduction.

This publication, *'Sea, my Life: Protecting Oceans, Sustaining our Future'* highlights the results of a selection of projects centred on marine protected areas in different parts of the developing world. It showcases a variety of ecosystem- and area-based approaches – such as marine spatial planning, large marine ecosystems, marine protected areas, sustainable resource-use, and community stewardship – and presents lessons and insights that provide valuable guidance for scaling-up efforts to establish and strengthen marine protected areas as a key part of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and especially SDG 14.

Over the past two decades, the number and size of marine protected areas world-wide has increased significantly as a result of global efforts involving many organizations and governments. Currently, there are approximately 14,700 marine protected areas around the world, covering an area of almost 15 million km² and representing a little over five percent of the oceans. Whilst this is a commendable achievement, we know it is not yet enough.

Unless governments and users of marine and coastal resources take urgent action, many critical habitats could be irreparably degraded within our lifetimes. Stronger and scaled-up conservation actions – and investments in effective protection and management – need to be triggered now to avoid diminishing crucial ocean and coastal assets. These are daunting challenges, but they also provide many opportunities for placing integrated protection, management and use of ocean and coastal resources at the core of the sustainable development agenda.

Our ambitious global goal is to go beyond the 10 percent for marine protected areas set by SDG 14 (Target 5), to protect at least 30 percent of the ocean by 2030. Achieving this will require co-ordinated and collective effort involving many organizations, sectors and disciplines. UNDP's partnership with the GEF – the single largest source of finance for biodiversity and ecosystem management globally – is central to our strategy for sustaining ocean ecosystems. We are committed to working in collaboration with the international community to catalyze greater public and private sector investment and engagement in expanding and strengthening marine protected areas, to secure the future we want for our 'ocean planet' and its people.

Adriana Dinu

Gustavo Fonseca



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Executive Coordinator, Global
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A tropical seascape with a thatched hut on stilts in the background and a outrigger canoe in the foreground. The water is clear and turquoise, and the sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A person is standing in the water near the hut, and another person is in the outrigger canoe.

SETTING SAIL

A journey to marine protected areas around the world



In the azure seas of the western Indian Ocean, a coelacanth drifts slowly and deliberately through underwater caves hidden deep beneath the volcanic islands of the Comoros archipelago. These enigmatic pre-historic fishes – once thought to be extinct – have survived for over 70 million years in the warm, temperate waters off the coasts of Africa and Asia. What does the future hold for these animals? This depends on the measures we take to protect ocean ecosystems, the tens of thousands of species to which they are home, and the people who depend on them.

One Planet, One Ocean

All life on Earth is affected by the ocean, either directly or indirectly. Covering over three quarters of the surface of the planet, the ocean represents the world's largest connected ecosystem, providing essential functions and services without which humans cannot survive. It supplies freshwater (most rain being derived from the sea) and oxygen, moderates the Earth's climate, and influences weather patterns. Marine and coastal ecosystems provide food, medicines, minerals and energy resources, and they support national economies and the livelihoods and well-being of billions of people. The ocean is also a source of inspiration, rejuvenation and discovery, and forms an integral component in the heritage of many cultures.

Ocean values at a glance

- More than 3 billion people depend on fish as their principal source of protein, while fisheries, aquaculture and marine tourism provide much-needed jobs for people living in coastal areas.
- Coral reefs and coastal ecosystems such as mangrove forests and estuaries serve as nurseries for fish and other marine life, and protect shorelines from storm damage and tidal surges.
- The estimated global market value of marine and coastal resources and industries is US\$3 to 6 trillion annually, or 5 percent of global Gross Domestic Product.

(UNDP Oceans Action Hub: www.oceanactionhub.org)

Tragedy of the ocean commons

Human activities are placing the future of marine and coastal ecosystems at immense risk through weak governance and resource management, pollution, changes to ocean chemistry, over-harvesting, and physical modifications to beaches, the sea floor, coasts, and the rivers that feed into the ocean. The sheer number of people who use and depend on the ocean, and the unsustainable practices that are being adopted, are leading to biodiversity loss and degradation of vital ocean ecosystems.

Today, over five percent of the world's oceans are protected, but, many marine protected areas are poorly governed. Properly managed, these marine protected areas can play a critical role in protecting fragile marine and coastal habitats – and the biodiversity and people that they support – by improving ecosystem health, securing sources of food, making shorelines more resilient, providing income and jobs, and building sustainable communities.

Protecting oceans, sustaining the future

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that the way in which vital ocean resources are managed is essential for building resilient nations and sustaining the kind of growth that improves the quality of life of all people. Sustainable Development Goal 14, *Life under water*, aims to 'conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development'. It includes ten targets for addressing the urgent challenges facing the oceans, including pollution, overfishing and destructive fishing methods, perverse fisheries subsidies, loss of coastal habitats, and ocean acidification. Target 14.5, which aims to have at least ten per cent of coastal and marine areas included in protected areas by 2020, is vital for protecting biodiversity, restoring fish stocks and supporting ocean-based economies and livelihoods.

In recent decades, there has been a major effort to establish marine protected areas in support of achieving global commitments to restoring and preserving ocean health. These protected areas are also evolving to play a valuable role in meeting the twin challenges of economic growth and poverty reduction through marine spatial planning, integrated ocean management, and building the 'blue economy', which promotes the creation of a low-carbon, resource-efficient, socially-inclusive society through the conservation and sustainable use of ocean resources.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Marine protected areas are defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity as: *any defined area within or adjacent to the marine environment, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by legislation or other effective means, including custom, with the effect that its marine and/or coastal biodiversity enjoys a higher level of protection than its surroundings*. They are created and managed in many forms, most typically:

- **Marine Reserves:** Areas in which some or all extractive activities are prohibited.
- **Multiple-Use Marine Protected Areas:** Multiple-use areas, often extending over large areas, that allow for integrated management of entire marine (and coastal) ecosystems, usually through a zonation process.
- **National Marine Protected Area Systems:** A network of marine protected areas established and managed by federal, state, tribal or local governments that work together at the regional and national level to achieve common objectives for conserving a nation's significant natural and cultural resources.

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