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Oceans Compact

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THE OCEANS COMPACT

HEALTHY OCEANS
FOR PROSPERITY

*An Initiative of the
United Nations Secretary-General*





BAN KI-MOON

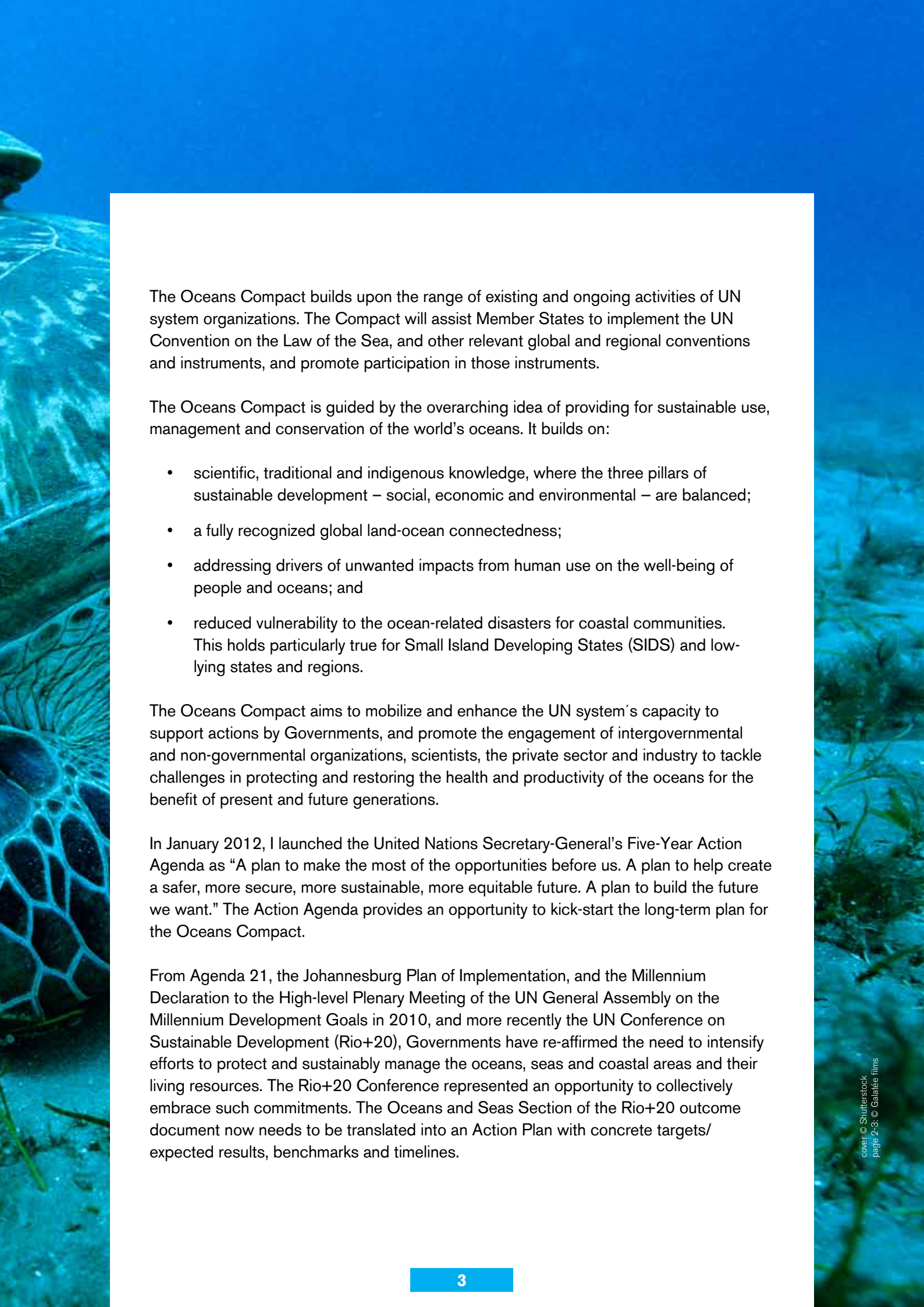
Secretary-General of the United Nations

The world's oceans are key to sustaining life on the planet. The ocean constitutes a conduit for ninety per cent of the world trade, and for connecting people, markets and livelihoods. In light of the ocean's interconnectedness, all nations of the world should strive to make the oceans places of safety and sustainability of maritime activities for all humankind.

They provide a range of benefits for human well-being and prosperity – food production, employment creation, temperature moderation, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, habitats and biodiversity, tourism, an energy source, and others. Humans, however, have put the oceans under risk of irreversible damage by over-fishing, climate change and ocean acidification (from absorbed carbon emissions), increasing pollution, unsustainable coastal area development, and unwanted impacts from resource extraction, resulting in loss of biodiversity, decreased abundance of species, damage to habitats and loss of ecological functions.

We need to reverse these trends by using the vast potential wealth of the oceans to build a society that uses ocean resources wisely and is less vulnerable to ocean-related hazards. We need to adopt a more proactive vision for the oceans and establish a new understanding of their capacity. We need to create new partnerships while strengthening key existing ones, and develop ways of sharing the wealth of the oceans to benefit all.

The Oceans Compact is an initiative to set out a strategic vision for the UN system to deliver on its ocean-related mandates, consistent with the Rio+20 outcome document "The Future We Want", in a more coherent and effective manner. It aims to provide a platform for all stakeholders to collaborate and accelerate progress in the achievement of the common goal of "Healthy Oceans for Prosperity". It is essential to address the issues of declining ocean health and productivity as well as weak ocean management. The Oceans Compact will be underpinned by pragmatic short-, medium- and long-term strategies to increase cross sectoral coordination and cooperation at the national, regional and global levels as well as within the United Nations system. The intent is to address the cumulative impacts of sectoral activities on the marine environment, including through implementing ecosystem and precautionary approaches.



The Oceans Compact builds upon the range of existing and ongoing activities of UN system organizations. The Compact will assist Member States to implement the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and other relevant global and regional conventions and instruments, and promote participation in those instruments.

The Oceans Compact is guided by the overarching idea of providing for sustainable use, management and conservation of the world's oceans. It builds on:

- scientific, traditional and indigenous knowledge, where the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – are balanced;
- a fully recognized global land-ocean connectedness;
- addressing drivers of unwanted impacts from human use on the well-being of people and oceans; and
- reduced vulnerability to the ocean-related disasters for coastal communities. This holds particularly true for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and low-lying states and regions.

The Oceans Compact aims to mobilize and enhance the UN system's capacity to support actions by Governments, and promote the engagement of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, scientists, the private sector and industry to tackle challenges in protecting and restoring the health and productivity of the oceans for the benefit of present and future generations.

In January 2012, I launched the United Nations Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda as "A plan to make the most of the opportunities before us. A plan to help create a safer, more secure, more sustainable, more equitable future. A plan to build the future we want." The Action Agenda provides an opportunity to kick-start the long-term plan for the Oceans Compact.

From Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the Millennium Declaration to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals in 2010, and more recently the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), Governments have re-affirmed the need to intensify efforts to protect and sustainably manage the oceans, seas and coastal areas and their living resources. The Rio+20 Conference represented an opportunity to collectively embrace such commitments. The Oceans and Seas Section of the Rio+20 outcome document now needs to be translated into an Action Plan with concrete targets/expected results, benchmarks and timelines.



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ONE GOAL, THREE OBJECTIVES

I will encourage Member States, the private sector and civil society to make global and individual commitments to restoring oceans to healthy, productive and resilient systems as a matter of urgency and against the appropriate baselines to ensure human well-being and prosperity. To attain the goal of “Healthy Oceans for Prosperity”, we need to discover new and innovative ways to protect ocean resources, use them more efficiently, while ensuring sustainable use and conservation of natural resources by all stakeholders. Three inter-related objectives advance this goal:

1. *Protecting people and improving the health of the oceans through:*

- Reducing the vulnerability of people to the effects of ocean degradation and natural hazards, including tsunamis, and anthropogenic environmental degradation, including possible sources of livelihood for coastal populations;
- Developing ways and means of adaptation to the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise;
- Promoting more sustainable management of coastal areas;
- Reducing pollutants from sea and land-based activities, including gas and oil extraction, marine debris, harmful substances and nutrients from wastewater, industrial and agricultural runoff entering the world's oceans;
- Reducing over-fishing and eliminating destructive fishing practices;
- Encouraging a green economy approach in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;
- Strengthening the implementation of existing agreements.

In this regard, it is particularly important that:

- a. Regions and countries most vulnerable to marine related hazards (including sea level rise) be identified and mitigation and adaptation plans developed;
- b. Early warning systems for tsunamis and other extreme events be established for all vulnerable regions;
- c. By 2025, based on collected scientific data, all countries set relevant national targets for nutrients, marine debris and wastewater.

2. *Protecting, recovering and sustaining the oceans' environment and natural resources and restoring their full food production and livelihoods services through:*

- Rebuilding of over-exploited, depleted and recovering fish stocks, including by encouraging States to renew efforts to ensure that living resources are no longer endangered by over-fishing and destructive fishing practices taking into account the effects of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- Conserving and restoring marine habitats important for carbon sequestration and storage;
- Conserving and protecting marine and coastal biodiversity;
- Halting the spread of invasive alien species; and
- Strengthening the implementation of existing instruments and measures.

In that regard: I will work with all Member States to promote the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity, with a view to ensuring that:

- a. **By 2020**, at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes; and
- b. **By 2015**, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are reduced so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

I will support Governments' efforts to meet the 2015 target agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield.

I am committed to supporting Member States in their work in the context of the General Assembly Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. In particular, together, we must endeavor to complete, before the end of the 69th session of the General Assembly, the process initiated within the Working Group to ensure that the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction effectively addresses those issues, including through the implementation of existing instruments and the possible development of a multilateral agreement under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The UN system will also work with Member States to step up efforts to prevent and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including actions to ensure that flag States comply fully with existing obligations and exercise effective control over their nationals, vessels engaged in such fishing are identified and offenders are deprived of the benefits accruing from it and capacity needs of developing countries are identified and supported. We must also step up efforts to reduce the capacity of the world's fishing fleet to levels commensurate with the sustainability of fish stocks, including through ongoing capacity assessment. We also need to encourage the elimination of subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity and to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including through the strengthening of disciplines on subsidies in the fisheries sector.



To this aim, I will deploy efforts to jointly promote with Member

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