

THE UN DECADE OF OCEAN SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2021-2030

TROPICAL AMERICAS & CARIBBEAN REGION

REGIONAL KICK-OFF CONFERENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report 2021-12-17

TROPICAL AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN

REGIÓN TROPICAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS Y EL CARIBE

RÉGION DE L'AMÉRIQUE TROPICALE ET DES CARAÏBES



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**The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development
2021-2030:
Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region**

Tropical Americas & Caribbean Regional Kick-off Conference

(December 16-17, 2021)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

English only

This document presents the summary results of the Ocean Decade Tropical Americas and Caribbean Regional Kick-off Conference convened by IOC of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions-IOCARIBE with UN Agencies and Partners under the auspices of the governments of Barbados and Colombia virtual session held December 16-17, 2021. The Regional Kick-off Conference marked the launch of the UN Ocean Decade in the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region (TAC). The Conference highlighted emerging regional engagement in co-designing partnerships for Regional Ocean Decade Actions and invited the mobilization of contributions and expressions of interest by UN and regional agencies, governments, industry and private sectors, and other stakeholder groups. It aimed to catalyze partnerships among various ocean stakeholder communities in the region. It reinforced the co-design of transformative ocean science solutions to the Ocean Decade Challenges to achieve the Ocean Decade Outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals.

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The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030: Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region

Regional Kick-off Conference Executive Summary

December 16 -17th at 09h00 Colombia Time (10h00 AST, 14h00 UTC).

Hosted by IOC of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions-
IOCARIBE under the auspices of the governments of Barbados and Colombia

Web: <http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/rkoc>

Simultaneous interpretation for the event was provided in English, French and Spanish.

1. BACKGROUND

Convened by IOC of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions-IOCARIBE with UN Agencies and Partners under the auspices of the governments of Barbados and Colombia, the Regional Kick-off Conference marked the launch of the UN Ocean Decade in the Tropical Americas and The Caribbean (TAC).

The Conference highlighted emerging regional engagement in co-designing partnerships for Regional Ocean Decade Actions and invited the mobilization of contributions and expressions of interest by UN and regional agencies, governments, industry and private sectors, and other stakeholder groups.

The Regional Kick-off Conference was part of the region-wide efforts in a substantive development and implementation of Decade Actions. It aimed to catalyze partnerships among various ocean stakeholder communities in the region. It reinforced the co-design of transformative ocean science solutions to the Ocean Decade Challenges to achieve the Ocean Decade Outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals. The Agenda for the Kickoff Conference is presented in Annex 1 of the Report.

The first day reviewed proposed transformative ocean science solutions and assessed the value, feasibility, and priority of potential Regional Ocean Decade Actions. A consultative process was undertaken to allow the contribution of participants.

The second day highlighted emerging regional engagement in co-designing partnerships for Regional Ocean Decade Actions; inviting contributions and expressions of interest by the IOC of



UNESCO and regional agencies, national governments within TAC, industry and private sectors, and other stakeholders' groups, finishing with a Regional Call of Action, which is included in Annex 2.

Over 300 participants to the Kick-off conference were registered, noting an average of participation of 150 per day, as per Annex 3.

2. DAY 1 - REGIONAL CONSULTATION - CO-DESIGN

16 December 2021

Opening – setting the scene

As a result of the Ocean Decade planning process, a Regional Planning Group (WTA RPG) for the UN Ocean Decade was established in 2020 to advance and coordinate strategic partnerships and actions for Western Tropical Atlantic (WTA) and the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) -The Tropical Americas and Caribbean (TAC) Region - engagement in the Ocean Decade. The WTA RPG established seven Working Groups to promote multidisciplinary, inclusive co-design and implementation partnerships to achieve each of the six initial Societal Outcomes and one specific for Capacity Development. The seventh societal outcome, an Inspiring and Engaging Ocean, has been addressed as a cross-cutting theme.

Seven online workshops were organized around the corresponding WTA Working Groups (conducted from July – October 2021). The workshops aimed to review knowledge gaps, barriers, identify priority areas and needs in capacity development, and catalyze a co-design process to find transformative ocean science solutions and develop potential Regional Ocean Decade Actions (programmes /projects /activities /contributions) as part of the global collective effort under the Ocean Decade.

During the first day of the Kick-Off Conference, three themed sessions to address the ten Ocean Decade Challenges were established. The sessions were designed under the Ocean Decade Challenges with a cross-reference to the Associated Regional Planning Working Groups for the Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region. The primary objectives of the Breakout Sessions were to contribute to the co-design of the proposals to the Ocean Decade considering the Regional Needs and Challenges. A review of the achievements and the implementation of the regional endorsed action from the first call and the regional participation of relevant Decade endorsed Programmes (i.e. Coast Predict; Ocean Best Practices) were part of the consultation process to provide feedback to the High-level Second Day of the Kick-Off Conference and the Regional Call for Action.

Part 1.- The Plenary and Opening session presented an overview of the Ocean Decade and the regional Developments. The presentation started with the context of environmental and the use of ocean resources problems that explained the need for an Ocean Decade supported in scientific knowledge, the science needed to achieve the ocean we want, the vision of the Decade. It explained how the Decade could help transform, measure, reduce, strengthen, accelerate, and deliver knowledge in co-design. It accounted for the different instruments that guide, structure and implement the Decade from the planning and preparation phase in 2018 until its launching in 2021. It was highlighted in that sense the setting of the WTA regional meeting within the Ocean Decade planning stage, its outputs and crosscutting priorities, the development of the regional planning group, its WGs and the regional action plan, the co-design thematic workshops, its outputs and the

accounting of many ongoing activities in the region. The presentation explained the importance of the National Committees in the interaction with the Ocean Decade Alliance Platform and Implementing Partners. It exemplified those existing in the region and invited those that do not have yet a National Committee to join and follow the Ocean Decade guidelines. The presentation continued with actions taken in the second half of 2020, following the first call of action, the endorsed programs and projects, underlining those that counted with regional stakeholders and institutions participation. A brief explanation of funding mechanisms was delivered, inviting the audience to submit projects or programs from the region to the second call of action. The overview ended with the ongoing Ocean Decade Laboratories and other meetings and workshops that could be of interest and invited the audience to actively participate with satellite activities of the many ongoing activities in the region.

Consultation Process

All information from the breakout sessions is available at the IOCARIBE website, as a repository with presentations and documents.

To facilitate the discussion, the participants went into three breakout groups. The groups were organized considering the three main themes of the decade:

- Knowledge and Solutions with a focus on the workshops of the Clean Ocean – Healthy Ocean – and Productive Ocean outcomes,
- Essential infrastructure, related to the workshops of the Safe Ocean, Predicted Ocean, and Transparent Ocean
- Foundational Challenges, based on the workshops on Capacity Development and Inspiring and Engaging Ocean.

Consultation documents as per Annex 4.

Knowledge and Solutions Break Out

Knowledge and Solutions

Challenge 1 Understand and beat marine pollution

Challenge 2 Multiple stressors on ecosystems

Challenge 3 Sustainably feed the global population

Challenge 4 Develop a sustainable and equitable ocean economy

Challenge 5 Ocean-climate nexus

Regional Working Groups: Clean Ocean – Healthy Ocean – Productive Ocean

Pollutants Observatory

- To achieve a clean ocean, there is a need for better governance and for national policies and regulatory frameworks to be updated with more forceful policies, penalties and mechanisms to facilitate better compliance and infrastructure to mitigate the pollution.
- The sources of pollution are already established; however, the challenge lies in establishing what should be done to eliminate these sources of contamination. There is a need for the scientific community to develop protocols that can be used by citizen scientists in the field, with the government supporting them through financial contributions.
- The characteristics of insular and continental territories should be recognized and differentiated, with individual countries developing national regulation plans that would further support the development of regional actions and programs and a regional pollution observatory.
- Policies and regulations are needed for single-use plastics, pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics, nano plastics, hydrocarbons, organic pollutants and emerging pollutants and should include standards to monitor their impact and effect on aquatic communities.
- There is a need for participatory policies and ocean knowledge programs targeted at all users, with mass dissemination efforts by various mechanisms. There is also a need to design a communication policy with the media as leading actors and communicators should be trained to communicate on a scientific basis.

Increasing knowledge to respond to multiple stressors in a changing environment

- Development of regional projects that facilitate sharing of information and transfer of knowledge, technologies and infrastructure can enhance the objectives focused on multiple stressors and their impact on biological communities.
- Fostering inter-sectoral and multinational efforts that facilitate collaboration amongst different disciplines and initiatives such as oceanographic and coastal observatories whilst encouraging the strengthening of decision-making is essential.
- Reanalyzing and promoting the commitments made in international agreements at the local government level is needed to implement them effectively. It is also important to capitalize on existing agendas and efforts to organize and coordinate joint work to ensure better implementation.
- The establishment of cooperative mechanisms and exchange of capacities through offers to share training, equipment, co-design, and joint projects is essential. The development and maintenance of regional training programs such as academic training programs can help maintain a constant group of trained professionals.
- There is a need for seminars or other events to regionally assess stressors and foster the standardization of protocols for the measurement of variables of common interest for decision-making in terms of management, conservation, and restoration.

- The creation of databases of institutions, researchers and experts in the region can help facilitate cooperation between institutions in research and training and access to technology.

Increasing knowledge on impacts of the blue economy activities and climate variability change on fisheries and ecosystems health

- Strengthening and enhancing synergies between national and transnational stakeholders is a meaningful way forward whilst ensuring that stakeholders understand their ocean role.
- Policies need to be more regularly updated to incorporate fundamental changes, and legislation must set the foundation for institutional arrangements.
- National policies need to be dynamic and adjust to environmental changes and strengthened so that when policy directions are given at the regional level (WECAFC, OSPESCA, CRFM), these regional policies are implemented/implementable.
- To ensure broad and equal access to technology, training, information and capacity building, there is a need to identify what is happening regionally and then identify and facilitate the relevant training needs and the programs available and eventually scale up.
- Recognizing stakeholders and ensuring that traditional knowledge is incorporated is essential. Fisher populations are dwindling and thus, there is a need to develop and sustain training to attract younger fishers.
- The ocean needs some recovery before we can consider expanding capacity, thus we need to collectively give the ocean a chance to recover after all these major disturbances and then build harvest capacity.
- Simplifying scientific language and summarizing critical information to engage policymakers and specific audiences is essential. Identifying and utilizing existing fora to communicate science and maximize the science-policy interface and engage the persons that drive policy decision-makers to engender action is needed
- The pandemic has created opportunities through virtual approaches to improve broader and more equitable access for knowledge and sharing information for training and building capacity.

Summary Moderator:

- Need holistic approach to account for geographic diversity
- Defined roles for contributions
- There is a need for updating and standardizing regulations. Current regulations do not address the issues and partnership challenges.
- It is critical to improving collaboration between regional and national governments.
- Policies and regional approaches to sustainable development must be adaptable.
- There is a significant disparity among capacity needs. One common need is to improve access to training and knowledge sharing.

- Decision-making processes must be gender-inclusive and account for traditional/local knowledge holders.

Essential infrastructure Break Out

Essential Infrastructure

Challenge 6 Increase community resilience to ocean hazards

Challenge 7 Expand the Global Ocean Observing System

Challenge 8 Create a digital representation of the Ocean

Regional Working Groups: Safe Ocean – Transparent and Accessible Ocean – Predicted Ocean

Essential Infrastructure Challenges

Deep conversations on observations, modelling, data and information management and Early Warning Systems

Data Management System – inventory of available Databases (Global - Regional - National), best practices, complexities, value in data sharing, access to technology regional – local and local –regional.

There are many ocean processes that could be modelled, and therefore the Region will have to prioritize according to interest

Impact Based MHEWS need to consider and work with the available data and information related to the identified hazards.

The desired outcome is risk-informed sustainable development through an evidence-based and impact-based Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS), which includes the four key elements: risk knowledge, monitoring and warning service, dissemination and communication, and response capability.

Regional Ocean and Coastal Hazards included in a TAC regional MHEWS should address, at least: Sea level rise, Sargassum, Tsunami, COVID-19, Wastewater, Hurricanes/Tropical Cyclones (storm surge and winds), Oil Spills and Coral Bleaching.

In consideration of its critical and immediate importance to the security of life and society, the System must address the threats, their direct and cascading impacts and TAC cultural, political, economic, social diversity, social capital needs and human and environmental sustainability requirements, and engage and address the most vulnerable.

Warning systems for multiple types of threats must be streamlined. Decade offers an opportunity to bring these multi warning systems into an integrated framework.

Elements of the Proposed Action: TAC Impact Based Multi-Hazard Early Warning System

1. Addresses all MHEWS components: Monitoring and Warning Services (highest), Risk Knowledge and Understanding (complexities and cascading impacts), Dissemination and Communication of information and warnings (pre-during-after, consistent, common understood, language/technology from regional thru national and local levels), and Response Capabilities
2. Maximizes the and strengthens linkages to existing efforts: UNDRR (Americas), Sendai Framework, Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazard Early Warning System (UNESCO/IOC ICG CARIBE EWS), Hurricanes (WMO RAIV), GOOS (IOC-WMO-UNEP-ICSU), Sargassum Hub, Regional Emergency Management Organizations (CEDEMA, CEPREDENAC, EMIZA), Decade Actions (Programmes: Ocean Teachers Global Academy and Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme, Projects and Contributions), PAHO, Caribbean Regional Early Warning System, CREWS (Climate Risk Early Warning System), Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, National HYDROMET Services (NHMS), Red Cross, Central America Tsunami Advisory Center (CATAC at INETER, Nicaragua), National Hurricane Center, CCCCC (Caribbean Community Center for Climate Change). Caribbean Meteorological Organization, UWI (SRC, Trinidad and Tobago), UWI (Jamaica), UPRM, National University Costa Rica (SINAMOT-UNA), French West Indies University (Guadeloupe), National Academia, National Disaster Management Organizations, Organization(s) of municipal/local officials Builds capacity (e.g. coding, numerical modelling, decision support tools for warning, communication technology, social communication) including at local level to provide better inclusion of local knowledge and trusted voices in the System. Broad and equal access to technology, training, information, and capacity building must be ensured. Systematic training in several languages is relevant with the commitment letters from MS or corresponding sponsoring institution to keep the trained staff and share the training with local teams.
3. Reinforces the many synergies with other Decade outcomes – Predicted Ocean (models. Forecasts, data), Clean Ocean (wastewater, oil spills), Productive Ocean (similar stakeholders), Inspiring and Engaging (Education and Outreach)
4. Develops a tightly connected structure of Regional to National to Local Governance and Forecasting and Warning Impact Networks. Local stakeholders need to be engaged early on.
5. Consider within the TAC MHEWS a wide range of ocean-related hazards, including Sea level rise, Sargassum, Tsunami, COVID-19, Wastewater, Tropical Cyclones and their impacts, and Oil Spills (a result of a survey in May 2021). While each of these hazards may have unique warnings and responses, many of the impacts are crosscutting, and the underlying infrastructure elements – observations, data management, and models and forecasts – should share common features of the integrated regional observing system.
6. Integrates infrastructure within a value chain approach, like the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) 2030 Strategy, connecting OBSERVATIONS through DATA MANAGEMENT for use in ANALYSES and MODELS to create APPLICATIONS. For the Impact Based MHEWS, the APPLICATIONS can be the critical forecasts and risk analysis products.
7. Considers the cultural, political, economic, social diversity, social capital needs and human and environmental sustainability requirements; engage and address the most vulnerable. Integrate the outcomes and recommendations of the VII Regional Platform for UNDRR (Jamaica), 2021.

Other issues that the participants addressed included:

Level of Action. Given the complexities, the existing initiatives for early warning for individual hazards, a broad group of stakeholders and regional scope of the activities, the consensus was that the action represented a “Programme” level action of the UN Ocean Decade Action. It should be used to bring together various existing regional disaster reduction activities into an efficient integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for the TAC.

Action Lead. Different alternatives were discussed, including an UN-led effort and a “coalition” led action. Several strong UN-led efforts in early warning could be tapped, including UNDRR, CARIBE-EWS (Caribbean Tsunami Information Center) and WMO. Additional resources would need to be identified. A coalition/Consortium would enhance partnerships, collaborations, empowerment of local, national, and regional efforts. Potential leads for a consortium led effort could be Universities in the TAC region and the regional emergency management organizations (CDEMA/CEPREDENAC/EMIZA).

A key to engaging the entire region is to facilitate the participation in collaborative data, information, and product management and access – including data and information sharing and transboundary ocean data and products (noting that hazards are transboundary).

Key contributors and partners need to be identified.

Ocean Observations and Information System:

- Ocean observations, data management, analysis, models, and products, are foundational to our approach to sustainable development.
- There is a need to foster a community that pulls data and information, not push.
- There is a need to show the value of data and ocean observations. Translate data to safety and wellbeing.
- Learn from existing mechanisms and expandable frameworks (e.g., WMO, UNESCO-IOC Tsunami; Mercator Ocean; Copernicus Marine Services)
- There is a need to think strategically about transitioning data and models to products and services and liaising demands between local and regional partners.
- New developments as the Digital Twin of the Ocean integrating a wide range of existing and new data sources, developing interactivity, and innovating the knowledge-sharing paradigm, need to be considered.

Foundational Challenges, Capacity Development – Inspiring Ocean Break Out

Foundational:

Challenge 9 Skills, knowledge, and technology for all

Challenge 10 Change humanity’s relationship with the ocean

Regional Working Groups: Cross-cutting – Capacity Development Inspiring Ocean

Best practices: achieving equal access to data by standardizing local, national, and international data

- International standards must address the region's most significant data needs. Workshops could be held aiming to understand the region's needs and reach an agreement on creating repositories of publicly available data. However, identifying funding opportunities to promote these workshops, maintaining these repositories, and developing regional standards is still a challenge to the region.
- Before drafting best practices, one must confirm that no international protocol addresses the regional issue. It is critical to understand if the problem of interoperability in the region exists because end users do not have access to or understand existing international data collection and data management protocols or if there is an actual need for developing new protocols.
- Language and translations of databases must be considered for achieving more publicly accessible data in the region.
- Sharing knowledge is a key element for achieving the ocean we want by 2030. Therefore, establishing efficient data sharing mechanisms will be crucial for the Ocean Decade. It can allow for better decision making. Understanding the most significant data needs should also spark a discussion about equitability in the region, with different countries having access to greater resolution of information and thus having a greater voice at the decision-making table.

Ocean literacy: changing local communities' relationship with the ocean by promoting the democratization of access to knowledge in the TAC Region

- There is no holistic understanding of Ocean Literacy by decision-makers. The articulation and implementation process is challenging to carry on. Moreover, there is a lack of understanding of the ocean as a part of social identity in the TAC region. People from non-coastal areas are less likely to engage in ocean issues.
- Aiming to overcome those issues, one must identify efficient methods to provide scientific information to society so that end-users can genuinely and clearly understand the data, making information available and accessible to everyone.
- Traditional knowledge can be a valuable tool to raise awareness and ease the “conversation” of ocean-related issues in the TAC region. It is urgent to adopt innovative strategies and means in this regard.
- There is a need to adopt or implement regional mechanisms to foster Ocean Literacy Actions. The TAC region must seek to lend visibility to those actions and encourage the adoption of local policies based on continuous and dynamic processes that help formalize marine education in curriculums.

The blue economy: enhancing comprehensive capacity development across all aspects of ocean science and for all stakeholders in the region in the TAC Region

- There is a need to improve data sharing methods in the TAC region. Sharing data is crucial to co-design. Moreover, knowledge and information exchange is critical for partnership development. It is important to note that the challenge is not sharing the information but transitioning from information sharing to taking action. Therefore, there is a need to develop local initiatives, especially for small island nations.
- Engagement in pilots to ready-test emerging initiatives is critical. Capacity needs must transition into local jobs. Moreover, there is a need to integrate existing economies (e.g., agriculture) into emerging science and technology initiatives.
- The blue economy is a cross-cutting theme and must be addressed multi and interdisciplinary. Therefore, sectors must be working together to take new tech and know-how into actual action and job growth. Best practices for data standardization are critical for cross-sectoral collaboration.
- A regional need for more mainstreaming of sustainable economic operations was identified. Enterprises should be encouraged to incorporate best practices to ensure sustainability.
- A lack of regional financial capacity to invest in new economies was identified. In that sense, stepping into new sectors (e.g., biotechnologies, marine energy) without local expertise is a regional challenge that could be overcome through increasing knowledge and data sharing in the TAC Region. There is also a need for diversifying skill sets and partnerships. Finally, one must promote diversity in blue economy initiatives.

Foundational Challenges

- The ocean becomes a part of social identity, mainly inland communities. There is a need to broaden the scope of ocean literacy.
- There is a need to think outside the box and inspire atypical communities.
- The process to translate data and knowledge into addressing needs for stakeholders.
- Key elements to address: broader sharing of ocean literacy programs, mechanisms for articulating science and traditional knowledge with social outcomes.
- Ensure data equity and improve data access. Standardization is a critical issue to be addressed.
- Strong emphasis on multi-sectoral approach to blue economy initiatives. Cradle to grave approach.
- Regional differences in tool access related to various science and applications were identified. Enhance data access and use of the cloud as data becomes more prominent.
- There is a need to promote discussion on emerging technologies and how they can be brought to the region. Think strategically about introducing new technologies that will build capacity and jobs.
- Increased focus on hazard-smart management programs. Progress is lost due to disaster. A process that builds the Decade in a way that enhances adaptation and resilience for the long term should be adopted.

Way forward

Part 1 of Day 1 was basically informative and in an agile format the session updated the audience on the Framework of the Conference, provided an overview of the Ocean Decade and set the context on the Regional Developments. It was followed by a Break-out Sessions that listened to our participants from the region with a dialogue providing feedback from this open interaction.

This session addressed the ten Ocean Decade Challenges in Breakout Sessions organized into the three main themes of the decade:

- Knowledge and Solutions with a focus on the Clean Ocean – Healthy Ocean – and Productive Ocean outcomes
- Essential infrastructure focus on Safe Ocean, Predicted Ocean, and Transparent Ocean and
- Foundational Challenges- Capacity Development and Inspiring and Engaging Ocean.

Breakout Session 1 on Knowledge and Solutions recognized as a way forward that understanding data needs in the region is required before establishing best practices requiring to organize regional workshops that help understand the needs. It recognized that co-design is crucial, that the ocean does not observe human dictated boundaries. Therefore, data considered necessary for solid decision making should not have the same human boundaries either.

Breakout Session 2 on Essential infrastructure recognized data – inventory, best practices, complexities, value in data sharing, access to technology regional – local and local –regional. There are many ocean processes that could be modelled and will have to be prioritized according to interest – MHEWS needs to work with the data and info.

Breakout Session 3 on Foundational Challenges recognized that co-design processes are critical, especially for capacity development. To overcome the foundational challenges, we need to think out of the box and inspire people with innovative strategies and means.

3. DAY 2 - HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

17 December 2021

Opening

High level statements as per Annex 5

Vice-president of Colombia & President of Colombian Ocean Commission

H.E. Martha Lucia Ramírez

Barbados Minister of Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy

H.E. Hon. Kirk Humphrey

Opening message (Video)

Audrey Azoulay - UNESCO DG

The Regional Implementation of the Ocean Decade

Ariel Troisi – IOC of UNESCO Chairperson

Wrap up Day 1

Report of the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean co-design process.

A dialogue between the Moderators of the Breakout Sessions and the Master of Ceremony, presented the participants of the Conference with the outcomes of the consultation process as described in the summary for Day 1. A mention of the regional planning group, its WGs and the regional action plan, the co-design thematic workshops, its outputs, the accounting of many ongoing activities in the region, and the Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region – Ocean Decade, and the regional way forward including a call for action.

Dialogues / Panels

Panel 1 - National Committees and National Science Commissions

The National Committees Representatives from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States of America, highlighted the importance of the national committee work to achieve the Ocean Decade Goals. In that sense, the Mexican National Committee was presented as a relevant tool to include ocean science capacity development in the national agenda. Moreover, including participants from diverse backgrounds (private sector, academia, and government representatives) was crucial to promoting national engagement beyond national ocean policies. Along the same lines, the Colombia Ocean Commission drew attention to working with different groups/sectors to strengthen the relationship between the government and the stakeholders. Colombia was also able to include the Ocean Decade Goals in the national ocean policy.

The USA and Brazil representatives highlighted the importance of philanthropic entities in achieving the ocean we want. The USA Committee underlined the importance of getting all people involved in the Ocean Decade as an efficient way to promote the development of innovative solutions to meet the Goals. The USA national committee is not focused only on developing science but also on integrating all stakeholders to make a positive change to engage everybody. Finally, Brazil presented its strategy to mobilize local communities and youth people. The country is pleased with the results of the regional mobilization groups responsible for promoting the Ocean Decade at the local level.

The National Committees noted that the use of an effective participatory process contributed to the development of regional mobilization groups that attracted attention and helped to carry the message out to communities to promote the Ocean Decade at the local level.

Finally, it was also considered important that the time frame for the Decade (2021-2030) had to extend longer to ensure the Decade Action. This would ensure the continuity of the process.

Case studies: Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, United States of America.

Panel 2 - Regional Cooperation - UN and Regional Agencies Cooperation

The Regional Organizations discussion focused on WMO, UNDRR and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Regional Programmes. The outcomes of the VII UNDRR Regional Americas Platform on the need for strategic partnerships, the strengthening of partnerships thru projects, the need for agreements and long-term arrangements, shared resources, the need to be specific and the enhancement of the value chain was well noted. WMO RAIV Hurricane Committee and Regional Climate

Centers have been instrumental in addressing the hazard of weather and climate events. The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism highlighted the longstanding success and the engagement and integration of local fishers.

Another case study (good practice) that was referenced was the UNESCO/IOC CARIBE EWS, which uses local, national, and regional governance thru its Caribbean Tsunami Information Center in Barbados, Tsunami Ready Programme (and its Ocean Decade goal of 100% of communities at risk recognized by 2030), annual Tsunami Exercises with hundreds of thousands registered participants and new Ocean Decade Forecasting Goal to reduce to just 10 minutes low uncertainty actionable tsunami forecasts.

Presentation on the Hydromet Alliance – The Systematic Observation Financing Facility.

As part of the discussion panels on regional cooperation and partnership, the latest developments on the WMO - Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) were presented as an opportunity to support the work in the region to promote an integrated and coherent approach to strengthen sustained ocean and coastal services. The longstanding contribution and engagement from the WMO on ocean related matters, through the collaborative work with the IOC of UNESCO, IMO, and IHO, was recognized.

Panel 3 - Partnerships, Funding – Resource Mobilization

Representatives from UN Specialized Agencies (World Meteorological Organization), Colombian Marine and Coastal research Institute (INVEMAR) and the private sector (Sandals Foundation) discussed the importance of partnerships, funding and resource mobilization as being crucial for the success of the Decade. Discussions revealed that collaboration locally and regionally can be improved and there is a need to find ways to align functions and organizations both at the national and regional level to not only improve communication but also to avoid duplication of efforts. There is a recognized need to form partnerships and encourage involvement from industry and the private sector, especially to transfer technology, knowledge and capacity. There are also opportunities to share expertise and co-design together both at the national and regional level and especially at the community level.

It was also suggested that collaboration with industry and the private sector can be especially beneficial and avoid duplication of efforts and finances when it comes to scientific exploration and discovering new species and habitats. The private sector through its Foundations was suggested to have excellent connections with NGOs and other local bodies which understand the science as well as the needs of the communities. Many private sectors work on the ground with communities and identified that there is often a disconnect between national governments and the needs of local communities. The private sector and its Foundation are often involved at all stages of the project management cycle and often implement projects and also provide funding. There are also opportunities for the private and public sector to collaborate and combine strengths in order to achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring the health of our ocean and all those dependent on it. Sharing of data and information is important at the local, regional and



international level, but it is also important that this information is communicated effectively and all stakeholders are reached. There is a need to consider communicating with stakeholders in non-traditional ways (e.g. social media) and ensure that all stakeholders are engaged and invested in especially traditional communities, fishers, women and youth.

Closing and Call for Action

The Conference agreed on a Regional Call for Action. Decision text as per-below. Full Text as per Annex 3.

“ACCELERATING SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR SOLVING OCEAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN THE TROPICAL AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN REGION”

The Regional Kick-off Conference makes a call to:

- Protect, conserve and restore ocean ecosystems to enhance resilience of regional and global communities that depend on them;
- Engage and inspire stakeholders to develop and enhance partnerships for co-design and co-delivery of transformative solutions for the critical decadal sustainable development challenges, leaving no one behind in the design, implementation and access to benefits;
- Identify programmes, projects, actions, including contributions for Decade solutions in the region;
- Support the creation of National Committees for the Ocean Decade to mobilize local and national collaboration to co-design and coordinate local, national and regional actions; and
- Participate through events, publications, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, offers for training opportunities, or contributions both financial and in-kind towards supporting the development of actions in the Decade.

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

Cartagena Time	ITEM
09:00 – 09:40	Part 1 Plenary and Opening
09:00 – 09:10	Welcome / Framework of the Conference Cesar Toro. IOCARIBE of IOC UNESCO Secretariat
09:10 – 09:25	Overview of Ocean Decade Vladimir Ryabinin. IOC Executive Secretary
09:25 – 09:40	Setting the context – Regional Developments Elva Escobar. Member Regional Planning Group
09:40 – 11:40	Part 2 Break out Session
09:40 – 09:50	Introduction to the Breakout Sessions Edgard Cabrera – Member Regional Planning Group
09:50 – 11:40	Three themed sessions to address the ten Ocean Decade Challenges
	<u>Breakout Session 1 - Knowledge and Solutions</u> Clean Ocean – Healthy Ocean – Productive Ocean Moderators: Francisco Arias – Alejandro Acosta – Ileana Lopez Rapporteur: Fadilah Ali
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAC Pollutants Observatory

- TAC Understanding multiple stressor effects
- TAC Fisheries/Tourism/Sustainable Development

Breakout Session- 2 - Essential Infrastructure

Transparent and Accessible Ocean – Predicted Ocean – Safe Ocean

Moderators: Christa Von Hillebrandt – Julio Morell / Douglas Wilson /Albert Martis

Rapporteur: Carlos Torres Navarrete

- An Ocean Observing System for the TAC Region
- Implementation of TAC Regional Modelling and Forecasting Systems
- Early Warning Systems and Services for the TAC Region
- Supporting Data and Information Management, Access and Delivery Systems for TAC/climate Digital Twins for the coastal ocean

Breakout Session– 3 - Foundational

Moderators: Elva Escobar – Arthur Paterson

Cross-Cutting – Capacity Development – Inspiring Ocean

Rapporteur: Milena Maltese Zuffo - Joe Naughton.

- Best practices: standardizing local, national, and international data
- Ocean literacy: towards ocean equity in TAC region
- The blue economy: enhancing capacity development in the TAC region
- Partnerships / cooperation in TAC region

11:40 – 11:50

Break – Participants to return to Plenary Session

Videos of the Ocean Decade

11:50 – 12:40

Part 3 Plenary Review

Moderator: Edgard Cabrera – Member Regional Planning Group

11:50- 12:40

Round Table with leaders of the Breakout Sessions

Report of the outcomes of each Breakout Session

Discussion on findings and recommendations

Part 4	
12:40 – 13:00	Day 1 Summary – Recommendations
12:40 – 12:45	Poll - Feedback Participants
12:45 – 12:55	Meeting summary and Way Forward Elva Escobar. Member Regional Planning Group
12:55 – 13:00	Closing Cesar Toro – IOCARIBE of IOC UNESCO Secretariat

DAY 2
17 December 2021

Cartagena Time	ITEM
9:00 – 9:30	Part 1 Opening (Master of Ceremony and Facilitator Ada Monzon)
09:05 – 09:10	Vice-president of Colombia & President of Colombian Ocean Commission H.E. Martha Lucia Ramírez
09:10 – 09:15	Barbados Minister of Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy H.E. Hon. Kirk Humphrey
09:15 – 09:20	Opening message (Video) Audrey Azoulay - UNESCO DG
09:20 – 09:30	The Regional Implementation of the Ocean Decade Ariel Troisi – IOC of UNESCO Chairperson
09:30 – 10:00	Part 2 Wrap up day 1. Outcomes and Recommendations
09:30 – 09:45	Report of the Tropical Americas and the Caribbean co-design process (Dialogue) Christa Von Hillebrandt / Elva Escobar/Ileana Lopez Moderator: Ada Monzon
09:45 – 11:00	Part 3 Dialogues / Panels

09:45 - 10:00

Introduction to the Session

Moderator: Ada Monzon

Participants: Countries with National Committees; National Councils of Sciences; Industry and NGOs; UN Agencies and Regional Organisations; Financial and Funding institutions; ECOPs and Youth, Indigenous community representatives

10:00 -11:00

Conversation Panels – Round Table - Three Dialogues

Moderator: Ada Monzon.

PANEL 1 - National Committees and National Science Commissions

Moderator: Leo Brewster Barbados Coastal Zone Management Unit

Participants:

Colombia National Ocean Decade Committee

Juan Camilo Forero

Brazil National Ocean Decade Committee

Roberto De Pinho

Mexico National Ocean Decade Committee

María Guadalupe Falcón

USA National Ocean Decade Committee

Mark Abbott

PANEL 2 - Regional Cooperation - UN and Regional Agencies Cooperation

Moderator: Christa von Hillebrandt

Participants:

Rodney Martinez - Regional Office - WMO

Carlos Uribe - Regional Office - UNDRR

Milton Haughton - Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism - CRFM

- Presentation on the Hydromet Alliance – The Systematic Observation Financing Facility -

PANEL 3 - Partnerships, Funding – Resource Mobilization

Moderator: Ada Monzon

Participants:

Albert Martis – Vice-President WMO

Georgia Lumley - Sandals Foundation

Francisco Arias – Director General INVEMAR

11:00 – 11:30

Part 4

Closing remarks - Call for Action

Tropical Americas and the Caribbean Region - Call for Action

Arnulfo Sanchez IOCARIBE of IOC UNESCO Chairman

Moderator: Cesar Toro. IOCARIBE of IOC UNESCO Secretariat

ANNEX 2: CALL FOR ACTION

The Regional Kick-off Conference for the Tropical Americas and The Caribbean United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development December 16-17, 2021

A CALL FOR ACTION

“Primero estaba el mar. Todo estaba oscuro. No había sol, ni luna, ni gente, ni animales, ni plantas. Sólo el mar estaba en todas partes. El mar era la madre. Ella era agua y agua por todas partes y ella estaba en todas partes. Así, primero sólo estaba la madre ...”

De la mitología Kogi (Comunidad Indígena Ancestral Caribe Colombia)

“In the beginning the ocean was there. Darkness all around. There was no sun, no moon, no people, no animals, no plants. Only ocean everywhere. The ocean was the mother. She was water and water everywhere as she was everywhere. And so, in the beginning only the mother was there ...”

From the Kogi mythology (Indigenous Colombian Caribbean Ancestral Community)

Our Ocean plays a fundamental role in making Earth habitable.

Covering more than 70% of the Earth’s surface, and due to its enormous depths, the Ocean holds 97% of the living space of the Planet.” (Attenborough, 2020). Such global import and intersectionality with human welfare and economy, directly affects our region’s achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

To reverse the decline in the health of the ocean, the UN Decade of Ocean Science mobilizes us to leverage our capabilities for the transformative science we need for the ocean we want.

Much of the ocean is now seriously degraded, with changes and losses in the structure, function, and benefits from marine systems. Scientific understanding of the ocean’s responses to pressures and management action is fundamental for sustainable development. Ocean observations and research are also essential to predict the consequences of change, design mitigation and guide adaptation. (First World Ocean Assessment, 2016).

Economy and livelihoods are strongly dependent on the state, quality and stability of ecosystem provision of goods and services. Sustainable fisheries, tourism, agriculture, industry, communications, and energy sectors require healthy and sustainably managed ecosystems. Moreover, extreme events such as

hurricanes, tsunamis or ecological disruptions such as pollution, oil spills or massive Sargassum beaching pose a strong burden on the life, economy and livelihoods of the Region. Furthermore, climate change and its impacts such as extreme weather and sea level rise, as well as deoxygenation and Ocean acidification, will lead to loss of diversity and the services it provides, and pose multiple and cascading challenges to the sustainability of the Region.

Finally, co-developed relevant scientific knowledge, ranging from “natural and social” science to local and indigenous knowledge, presented in a timely and appropriate language to stakeholders, should be the driver for sound decisions towards sustainability, and with support of sound scientific knowledge, mitigate the impacts and transform the hazards of environmental and climate change into opportunities.

Social and political diversity is reflected in a Region with more than 48 countries and territories ranging from large nations to small island developing states, all joined in a melting-pot of a variety of multifaceted communities, languages, capacity, and perspectives around economic development. The UN Decade will foster new social, economic and scientific innovation to build back better in a post covid-19 world and mobilize equitable and inclusive sustainable ocean economy development under a changing climate.

The Decade (UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development)

The Ocean Decade is a convening framework for diverse stakeholders to co-design and co-deliver solution-oriented research needed for a well-functioning ocean in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Capacity development, ocean literacy, best practices, and the removal of barriers to full gender, inter-generational, and geographic diversity are essential elements of the Decade. (IOC, 2021) The Decade will mobilize co-design partnerships to address the 10 grand challenges identified in the Decade Implementation Plan.

Call to Action

“ACCELERATING SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR SOLVING OCEAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN THE TROPICAL AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN REGION”

The Regional Kick-off Conference makes a call to:

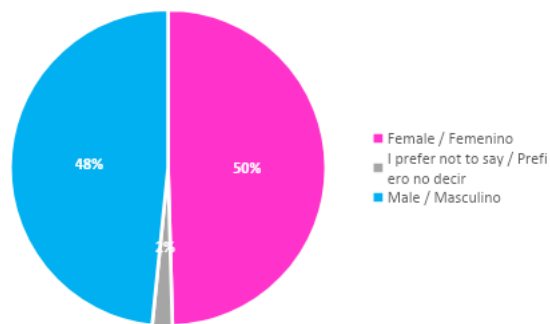
- Protect, conserve and restore ocean ecosystems to enhance resilience of regional and global communities that depend on them;
- Engage and inspire stakeholders to develop and enhance partnerships for co-design and co-delivery of transformative solutions for the critical decadal sustainable development challenges, leaving no one behind in the design, implementation and access to benefits;
- Identify programmes, projects, actions including contributions for Decade solutions in the region;



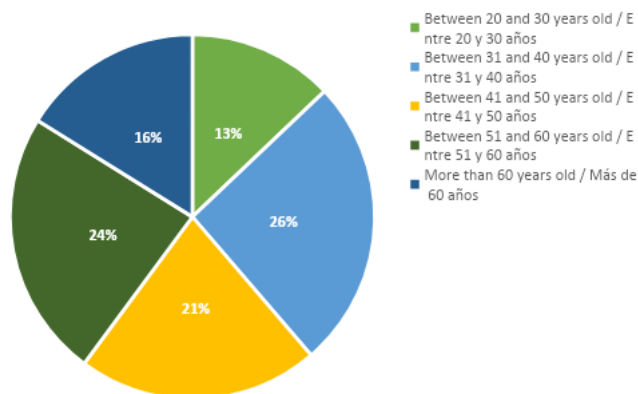
- Support the creation of National Committees for the Ocean Decade to mobilize local and national collaboration to co-design and coordinate local, national and regional actions; and
- Participate through events, publications, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, offers for training opportunities, or contributions both financial or in-kind towards supporting the development of actions in the Decade

ANNEX 3: PARTICIPANTS

The conference recorded attendance of Over 300 participants, noting an average of participation of 150 per day 200 registered participants, mostly, with an equal gender, generation distribution and geographically diverse, as per following graphics:



Graphic 1.- Gender distribution of participants



Graphic 2.- Age distribution of participants



Graphic 3.-

Geographic distribution of participants

ANNEX 4: CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

All information from the virtual workshops is posted at the IOCARIBE website, as a repository with presentations and documents. The findings, recommendations, and UN partner organization are as below.

1. A safe ocean working group webinar:

<http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/webinarseries/safeocean>

2. A transparent and accessible ocean workshop webinar:

<http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/webinarseries/ataao>

3. Capacity development workshop webinar:

<http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/webinarseries/cd>

4. A clean ocean workshop webinar:

<http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/webinarseries/cleanocean>

5. A healthy and resilient ocean workshop webinar:

<http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/webinarseries/ahar>

6. A predicted ocean workshop webinar:

<http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/webinarseries/apo>

7. A sustainably harvested and productive ocean workshop webinar

<http://iocaribe.ioc-unesco.org/webinarseries/ashapo>

8. Tropical Americas Kickoff Conference – Repository Documents including consolidated concept notes (11) provided as a reference for the consultation process

<https://oceanexpert.org/event/3335>



ANNEX 5: HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENTS

Vice-president of Colombia & President of Colombian Ocean Commission

H.E. Martha Lucia Ramírez

Barbados Minister of Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy

H.E. Hon. Kirk Humphrey

Opening message (Video)

Audrey Azoulay - UNESCO DG

The Regional Implementation of the Ocean Decade

Ariel Troisi – IOC of UNESCO Chairperson

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021- 2030: Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region

Regional Kick-off Conference December 16th - 17th 2021

Presented by

H.E. Martha Lucia Ramirez

Vice-president of Colombia & President of Colombian Ocean Commission

Estimados

- Kirk Humphrey, Ministro de Asuntos Marítimos y Economía Azul de Barbados
- Audrey Azoulay, Directora de la UNESCO
- Peter Thompson, Enviado Especial de las Naciones Unidas para los océanos
- Vladimir Ryabinin, Secretario Ejecutivo de la Comisión Oceanográfica Intergubernamental de la UNESCO
- Demás asistentes a este importante evento

Como Vicepresidente y Canciller de la República de Colombia y en calidad de Presidente de la Comisión Colombiana del Océano, es un honor contar con su presencia en este magno evento, que nos convoca para aunar los esfuerzos regionales hacia la definición y construcción de acciones en pro del Decenio de las Ciencias Oceánicas en la Región del Océano Tropical de las Américas.

El Decenio de las Ciencias Oceánicas representa una oportunidad para respaldar y vincular plenamente las acciones de actores diversos como los gobiernos, el sector privado, comunidades indígenas, entre otros, en donde producto de acciones integradoras, se propicia por la gestión sostenible del océano y el cumplimiento de la agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible y permite también, la construcción de marcos de acción a distintos niveles, esenciales para obtener políticas sólidas e informadas, basadas en ciencia y encaminadas a la promoción del desarrollo sostenible del océano.

Los desafíos de carácter local, nacional y regional requieren de un muy alto grado de cooperación e integración en esfuerzos, capacidades y acciones, de carácter innovador y participativo, que permitan articular efectivamente la mayor cantidad de actores, evitando la duplicidad de esfuerzos y de actividades.

El Desarrollo de Capacidades para la región resulta esencial para la articulación de esfuerzos y actividades encaminados hacia el diseño e implementación de iniciativas comunes que apuntan a los retos y necesidades regionales, y que, de manera conexas, contribuyen a la efectividad y manejo sostenible del océano.

- a. El Desarrollo de Capacidades destaca por las contribuciones relevantes que realiza en la promoción y fortalecimiento de la cultura oceánica, por la cual todos debemos reconocer la

importancia, influencia e impacto recíproco existente entre los seres humanos y el océano. Paralelamente, se caracteriza por su rol primordial y dual para el cumplimiento de los objetivos planteados por el Decenio. En primera instancia, el Desarrollo de Capacidades se presenta como una de las necesidades imperantes para los Estados, producto de su participación en fortalecer y consolidar procesos que permiten establecer y lograr el cumplimiento de objetivos a lo largo del tiempo. Como ejemplo de ello: identificar y eliminar las fuentes de contaminación en los ecosistemas marinos; consolidar procesos productivos sostenibles; y promover la importancia la comprensión integral de las dinámicas entre personas y océano.

- b. En contraposición, para el Decenio y las acciones que promueven su implementación a diferentes niveles, el Desarrollo de Capacidades proporciona una plataforma en donde Lanzamiento Regional Decenio de las Ciencias Oceánicas Para el Desarrollo Sostenible los Estados y demás actores interesados, construyen y desarrollan capacidades que facilitan la superación de cada uno de los desafíos en asuntos relacionados con el océano. Lo anterior, producto de los espacios de concertación, diálogo e intercambio de experiencias que conduzcan de manera conjunta hacia el océano que queremos.

Los instrumentos de Gobernanza que han surgido en el marco de esta iniciativa global, como el Grupo de Planificación Regional del Decenio para el Atlántico Tropical Occidental, representan elementos centrales para catalizar procesos que permitan el diseño conjunto de acciones regionales por medio del surgimiento y la potencialización de alianzas entre diversos actores.

Los esfuerzos regionales se complementan por medio del establecimiento de Comités Nacionales del Decenio, que actúan como plataformas nacionales de coordinación interinstitucional y multi participativa que vinculan a las instituciones políticas, científicas y a diferentes actores nacionales interesados en el océano y su gestión sostenible. En consecuencia, los procesos de articulación y coordinación nacional favorecen la comunicación regional y contribuyen a los mecanismos para el diseño conjunto e implementación de Acciones Regionales, por ende, el establecimiento de Comités Nacionales del Decenio se manifiesta como una necesidad constante en nuestra región.

Colombia, por medio de su Comité Nacional del Decenio ha logrado consolidar pasos significativos en esta materia, la cual se enmarca en la promoción y divulgación de las ciencias oceánicas y del diseño de estrategias que permitan la transición de las industrias oceánicas hacia enfoques sostenibles.

Es por ello que, desde la Comisión Colombiana del Océano, estamos trabajando para implementar y ejecutar en este decenio políticas que buscan **promover el desarrollo sostenible del territorio marino-costero** en Colombia, implicando a las partes interesadas y potenciando el acceso a los beneficios de que nos brinda tener dos océanos que pueden ser aprovechados de manera sostenible, sobre todo por las poblaciones de los 47 municipios costeros, entre las que se encuentran varias de las más pobres del país.

Para lo anterior, desde el inicio del gobierno del Presidente Iván Duque, estructuramos una estrategia con 11 ejes que identificamos como fundamentales para convertir a Colombia en una potencia bioceánica sostenible al 2030, que son: Armadores y Abanderamiento de buques; el desarrollo de la industria astillera; el desarrollo de la industria pesquera; el desarrollo de la gente de mar, el desarrollo de puertos, muelles y embarcaderos para promover el transporte marítimo; el desarrollo de los 47 municipios costeros; el desarrollo del turismo náutico, de playas y ecológico en zonas de bajamar; el desarrollo de las industrias costa afuera no solo en la exploración y explotación de hidrocarburos fósiles, sino y sobre

todo para la generación de fuentes de energías limpias como la eólica o la maremotriz; el desarrollo de la investigación científica oceánica tanto en las áreas de la oceanografía física para conocer los efectos de los movimientos de las masas de agua, las implicaciones del cambio climático sobre nuestros océanos, los efectos devastadores de la erosión costera para mitigarlos en pro de proteger nuestras costas, como también en la biología marina para conocer las especies de flora y fauna marina que habitan en nuestros océanos y establecer mecanismos para protegerlos y preservarlos para las generaciones futuras; el desarrollo fluvial área en la que tenemos mucho por hacer para que los más de Lanzamiento Regional Decenio de las Ciencias Oceánicas Para el Desarrollo Sostenible 16.000 kilómetros de ríos navegables sean utilizados apropiadamente dentro de la estrategia de transporte multimodal del país y hacer del cuidado de los ríos un objetivo también del decenio, concientizando a las poblaciones rivereñas para prevenir su contaminación y evitar llenarlos de basura que termina llegando a los océanos; y finalmente, pero no menos importante la Seguridad integral enfocada tanto en la protección de nuestras fronteras marítimas, como en el cuidado y protección de nuestros recursos marinos.

Esta estrategia la convertimos en política pública, estructurada en el documento CONPES 3990: Colombia Potencia Bioceánica Sostenible 2030 que se convierte en nuestra hoja de ruta para la implementación del Decenio a nivel nacional, regional y local, facilitando la gobernanza nacional en asuntos relacionados con el océano, lo que muestra el esfuerzo de nuestro país para no duplicar esfuerzos, entendiendo y propendiendo, porque esta iniciativa internacional sea implementada por medio de componentes multidisciplinarios.

Con la experiencia adquirida, Colombia busca replicar y compartir con los miembros de la región, las buenas prácticas y las lecciones aprendidas bajo diferentes mecanismos de gobernanza, finalmente, como producto de la articulación y coordinación nacional. El país propende por liderar y apoyar activamente en los procesos regionales para la planeación y diseño conjunto de Acciones Regionales del Decenio.

Quiero también resaltar la importancia de la Conferencia Regional del Decenio como una oportunidad para integrar y crear lazos de amistad y cooperación entre los diferentes actores del Océano Tropical de las Américas, como los gobiernos, las comunidades indígenas y afrodescendientes que habitan en gran parte de nuestras costas, el sector empresarial, las ONGs y organizaciones filantrópicas. Una estrategia de inclusión permite construir y fortalecer las acciones que guían el actuar conjunto de la región hacia la participación e implementación del Decenio de las Ciencias Oceánicas.

Las acciones regionales, nos permitirán avanzar y afianzar la comprensión acerca de la interacción e interdependencia de las actividades humanas, con el océano, sus ecosistemas y los bienes y servicios que nos proporciona. Por ello, permite consolidar nuestra contribución a la solución de problemas globales que afectan a toda la región.

Finalmente, los exhorto a trabajar muchísimo más por la inclusión de las mujeres en las ciencias oceánicas y en todas las actividades profesionales de la “Gente de Mar”, un mundo con mayor equidad de género es un mundo mejor; las mujeres hemos demostrado a lo largo de la historia que tenemos todas las condiciones para trabajar en áreas que normalmente estaban dedicadas solo a los hombres y los océanos no son la excepción, tanto en las áreas administrativas, como también en las operativas y científicas. Los Océanos necesitan una mayor comprensión por parte de la raza humana, si los destruimos también el planeta que es nuestro único hogar y la inclusión de cada vez más mujeres en trabajos relacionados con el mar nos facilitara las acciones del Decenio encaminadas a lograr tener al “océano



que queremos” con sus siete metas: océano limpio, océano sano y resiliente, océano productivo y sostenible, océano predecible, océano seguro, océano accesible, océano inspirador y estimulante.

Muchísimas Gracias



The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021- 2030: Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region

Regional Kick-off Conference December 16th - 17th 2021

Presented by

Hon. Kirk Humphrey Minister

Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Barbados

Background

The Regional Kick-off Conference will mark the launch of the UN Ocean Decade in the Tropical Americas and The Caribbean (TAC).

The Regional Kick-off Conference will represent the beginning of the Region-wide efforts in a substantive development and implementation of Decade Actions. It aims to catalyse partnerships among various ocean stakeholder communities in the region, and catalyse co-design of transformative ocean science solutions to the Ocean Decade Challenges to achieve the Ocean Decade Outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals.

Barbados is pleased to participate in this initiative as a meeting co-sponsor with the Colombian Ocean Commission - Government of Columbia and the IOC- UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE).

Today the meeting is to highlight emerging regional engagement in co-designing partnerships for Regional Ocean Decade Actions and mobilize contributions and expressions of interest by UN and regional agencies, governments, industry and private sectors, and other stakeholder groups.

Need to highlight areas of considered importance

It is important that the following be highlighted:

Uniqueness of the region from resources and value of oceans

The Latin America and Caribbean region boasts of a diverse uniqueness in its coastal marine and deep ocean resources. Generally, a lot is known and recognized about our coastal ecosystems and nearshore and offshore fishing grounds and the vagaries of transboundary fishing issues across many territories. However, the information of the relevance of the ocean space and its values and the value of deep ocean resources is still very much in the unknown. This decade is to target opportunity for creating greater understanding and appreciation of the ocean and its resources and connected resources. The dedicated planning to take place to execute projects to safeguard the ocean and its resources are now timely as the

emphasis on blue economy development and strategic plans for sustainable ocean based economies are becoming more popular.

Barbados has recently concluded as Rapid Assessment Blue Economy Scoping Study and a more detailed Blue Economy Policy Framework and Strategic Action Plan and Road Map. However our knowledge of the ocean is still very much in the dark, so for us this meeting is timely

How the decade will help in moving forward and energize the trajectory of the region through blue economy or sustainable ocean based economy development initiatives

The Ocean Decade is being prepared in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that has changed the world, and ocean science, forever. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of science and knowledge for decision making and policy. As the world adjusts to a new normal, the ocean will need to play a central role in post-pandemic recovery efforts. The decade will assist countries of the region to prioritize their areas of interest in marine and ocean science.

An opportunity exists to broaden appreciation of new blue economy sectors through the use of science in guiding new opportunities for development and expansion in traditional blue economy sectors. The region must respond to the upcoming technologies that can be used constructively to assist in the appreciative understanding of the ocean and its resources.

Importance of strengthening partnerships across the region

This decade of ocean science activity will provide opportunity to build better south - south cooperation and research opportunities in areas of mutual interest. The ability to collaborate on projects of mutual interest will propel the region forward in ways that have never been experienced in the past.

Support the call for action to drive the decade of ocean science forward

The call goes out for all meeting attendees to respond to this regional call for action to drive the decade of ocean science activities forward. The IOCARIBE and its associated partner agencies will do all in their power to encourage participation and ongoing support. However it will not be successful without the committed involvement of the IOCARIBE member states working with associated partner agencies.

It is important to establish the national committees to work on the activities for the decade. I urge all member and participating states to initiate this activity and actively participate in the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

I wish you successful discussions today. I thank you.