



Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge: Rescuing an Ocean in Crisis

Concept paper



The Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge seeks to focus global attention, build new partnerships and generate the necessary commitments to address threats to the world's largest natural resource – The Pacific Ocean - by 2020.

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The Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge

2008 is IYOTO+10, ten years after the United Nations declared 1998 the International Year of the Ocean.

The Pacific Ocean;

- Is the largest single geographic feature on Planet Earth, it represents about half the global ocean space and covers approximately one third of the earth's surface.
- It hosts a complex of ecosystems¹ which give rise to a wealth of resources available for local and global consumption and which must be sustainably managed.
- It is the engine room of the world's climate, providing the largest interface between the ocean surface layers, that store a large proportion of the incoming solar energy, and the atmosphere.
- It is "friend and foe" to millions who live in and around the Pacific Ocean. It feeds them, and is the source of many natural disasters. It influences the lives of hundreds of millions around the globe through global impacts of events....

The Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge is an initiative to be launched in 2008, a decade after the International Year of the Ocean, to re-invigorate attention to the Pacific Ocean. It is intended to generate over the coming decade a process that will ensure the Pacific Ocean gets the ongoing attention it justly deserves to preserve and sustainably utilise it, its ecosystems, and the associated resources. Thus the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge is the response required to the call to "Rescue an Ocean in Crisis".

The Vision

A Pacific Ocean ecosystem that is healthy and bountiful, sustaining the livelihoods and cultures of the Pacific peoples and contributing significantly to the health and economic vitality of the world.

The Challenge

The Pacific Ocean hosts a significant proportion of the world's marine and terrestrial biodiversity. The ecosystems of the Pacific islands support more rare, endangered and threatened species than anywhere else on earth. This is partly due to the fact that endemism exceeds 80% in many islands.

Up to 50 percent of the region's total biodiversity is now at risk and the threats continue to grow with climate change and over-harvesting of resources, including the now accessible deep sea beds.

Rapidly declining tuna fish stocks and increasing pressure on coastal and marine habitats are depleting the ocean, impacting on Pacific island countries' economies, the livelihoods of people in the Pacific

region, and food security across the globe. Climate change has raised the profile of these issues adding to the ocean's vulnerability, and the vulnerability of the people who depend on it. In the small island developing countries of the Pacific, coral bleaching alone will reduce GDP by 40-50% by 2020.

The Pacific Islands Forum members, especially the island members, have stewardship over a vast part of the Pacific Ocean. Over the past decade the Forum has promoted the development of a Pacific Regional Ocean Policy (2002) and an accompanying Action Plan (2004). Regrettably, due in large part to the lack of substantive funds and technical resources at regional and national level, the Action Plan is yet to be meaningfully implemented.

Furthermore, activities and discussions on Pacific Ocean issues have been divided into multiple international, and regional forums that have split the ocean geographically or by thematic issues. Similarly, at the national level responsibility for ocean issues has generally been split across several parts of the administration. Short-term projects have not been able to succeed at the scale required to provide sustainable solutions at the national level nor address wider ocean issues.

The Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge seeks to raise the resources and commitment required to develop and implement a long-term, comprehensive and cohesive strategy and action plan to curb the impacts on the Pacific Ocean ecosystems and the resulting negative impacts on the Pacific Ocean region and the globe.

Effective actions must ensure ownership of the Challenge through:

- New partnerships with private enterprise at all levels, including Fortune 500 companies on the Pacific rim and extractive industries;
- Broad appeal to individuals / consumers, and decision-makers in target countries; and
- Empowering stakeholders at all levels.

These actions recognise the Pacific Ocean as a single ecosystem, comprised of many parts, that is a common resource for all parties and a natural asset with huge global value. It exists for the global good and must be treated as such, whilst at the same time recognising that stewardship of large parts of the Pacific Ocean is vested nationally through the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Way Forward

The scope and dimensions of the crisis are broadly understood and the implications of climate change upon the already struggling Pacific demand a cohesive strategy and strong actions now.

At all levels, global, regional and national, new commitments are required to re-invigorate and ensure effective action. Within the Pacific Island countries, many communities have repeatedly and clearly identified key dimensions of solutions to addressing the

¹ The use of the word "ecosystem" in the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge is consistent with the Convention on Biodiversity: which establishes an ecosystem-based approach to include all physical, chemical and biological attributes together with living and non-living resources.

crisis. The solutions, largely, have not been adequately implemented.

The Pacific Ocean crisis is the result of long-term problems and threats and requires long-term, collaborative and ongoing action for them to be adequately addressed. Securing new commitments, underpinned by a sustainable financing mechanism is the key.

Although the threat of climate change is formidable, with it also comes an increased awareness that is creating opportunities: opportunities for exciting strategies to build new partnerships, mobilise resources and make a real impact on the declining health of this global natural asset.

The Initiative

The overarching actions will include

- The preparation of a Scientific Statement on the threats to the Pacific Ocean that are being accelerated by climate change;
- The completion of a Pacific Ocean Report;
- The development of a Pacific Ocean 2020 Strategy that is built through ownership and an integrated strategic approach across all stakeholders, and based upon the recommendations of the Pacific Ocean Report and on a review of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy and Action Plan as well as existing national marine strategies;
- The establishment of a Pacific Ocean Trust Fund;
- The launch of a biennial Meeting process which will ensure that ongoing attention is given to the Pacific Ocean that is built around ownership and an integrated strategic approach across all stakeholders.

1. The Scientific Statement

The Scientific Statement will be developed by scientists from 30+ nations in and around the Pacific, identifying key threats to the Pacific Ocean that are being accelerated by climate change. The Statement will provide the scientific basis with which to raise the call for urgent action.

2. The Pacific Ocean Report

This “Stern-like” report will deliver a compelling call to action. The report will review existing information to establish the foundations for a long-term Programme of work to support conservation in the Pacific. The information is to be presented in a manner that is meaningful and useful to decision-makers.

3. The Pacific Ocean 2020 Strategy

The Report will be the basis for developing the Pacific Ocean 2020 Strategy which will identify new actions and build on the significant, ongoing work that is essential to the future of the Pacific. The Strategy will comprise a Programme of work which will build strongly upon existing plans and strategies across the Pacific Ocean, including the Pacific Islands Region Ocean Policy and Action Plan and other regional policies. The Pan-Pacific component of the work will have global implications as it will reflect the positive impacts of a healthy Pacific Ocean to the globe versus the cost of inaction if we

allow the current over-harvesting of these resources to continue.

The strategy and an action plan will develop broad recovery targets that will halt and reverse the environmental decline and identifies activities that will enable these targets to be achieved.

4. A (Billion Dollar) Pacific Ocean Trust Fund

Effective implementation of the Pacific Ocean 2020 Strategy requires a sustainable financing mechanism. Interest generated from the Trust Fund will ensure significant perpetual support for local, national and regional initiatives identified in the Strategy.

The climate change threat also opens new opportunities: growing awareness in all sectors, especially in developed country markets and new doors for fund raising. This initiative is aimed at raising new funding for Pacific Ocean issues at a scale that can significantly shift the level of engagement with environment at all levels in the region.

Appropriate and robust governance structures, investment and disbursement models for the functioning of this trust fund must be developed and implemented.

5. A Biennial “Davos-like” Summit

This summit provides an ongoing platform to address environmental and development issues affecting the Pacific Ocean. Participants are to include government, private sector, donor / development agencies and civil society. The summit allows participants to build high-level networks, raise attention and commit to challenges.

The Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge could become a flagship for implementation of an Ocean strategy with Small Island Nations and rim countries in other oceans. As such it will contribute to internationally agreed outcomes such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the Mauritius Strategy for further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (2005).

What Next?

Activities to initiate the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge include the following.

- Establishment of a Core Strategy Team: Identify and invite key high-level partners who want to be involved in the development and oversight of the Pacific Challenge
- Partners to nominate members for a small communications team to oversee and contribute to the development and implementation of an overarching communications strategy to accompany all stages of the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge
- Partners to determine the way forward for a “Pacific Ocean Report”. This will include:

- Discussion on submissions from IUCN Oceania on a way forward
- Commitments to funding
- Makeup of appropriate teams / partners
- Guiding activities including reviewing and consolidating all available information on values and the state of the Pacific and threats to the Pacific values and resources

Partners to guide the Pacific Ocean 2020 Strategy including:

- Reviewing and consolidating all available information on existing conservation plans and their success
 - Identifying examples of and criteria for success and for failure
 - Identify marine and coastal conservation management gaps
 - Collaborative development of overarching Pacific-wide conservation strategies, processes and criteria building on existing plans
- Partners to determine the way forward for the Pacific Ocean Trust Fund which will include:
 - Developing robust, transparent and equitable governance structures around the Pacific Challenge Trust Fund
 - Developing robust, transparent and equitable disbursement processes for use of the Pacific Challenge Trust Fund
 - Developing effective and reliable investment strategies for the Pacific Challenge Trust Fund

Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge Partners

The Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge will be facilitated by IUCN Oceania and key partners, working together with regional organisations, government decision-makers, the private sector and non-government organisations with a stake in the Pacific Ocean.

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