

WCC-2016-Res-057-EN

Take greater account of the ocean in the climate regime

NOTING that climate change is recognised by scientists and States as an immediate threat with potentially irreversible impacts and profoundly destabilising and damaging impacts on human societies and the planet itself;

COMMENDING Parties for their commitment made in Paris at the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21, December 2015) to aim to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

RECALLING that, in its preamble, the Paris Agreement highlights the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity;

NOTING WITH CONCERN the adverse effects of climate change on ecosystems and marine species, notably through sea level rise, increased sea temperatures, freshening, and consequential elevation and re-routing of deep ocean conveyor belt currents, ocean acidification and the intensification and spread of coral reef bleaching, range changes of marine species and storm surges;

RECOGNISING the key role played by the ocean in climate regulation;

RECALLING Aichi Biodiversity Targets 10, 11, and 15 regarding marine and coastal ecosystems, and marine protected areas;

STRESSING that the oceans cover 71% of the Earth's surface, produce over 50% of the oxygen in the air we breathe, and annually absorb about a quarter of the CO₂ and over 90% of the excess heat generated by human activities;

NOTING the importance of taking the oceans into account during the development and implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation plans;

WELCOMING the preparation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on climate change, the oceans and the cryosphere, and also encouraged that the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment report includes oceans;

FURTHER WELCOMING the international action of the Ocean and Climate Platform, and its capacity to bring together ocean stakeholders, to raise public awareness, as well as awareness of those who make decisions regarding ocean and climate issues;

COMMENDING the release of the IUCN report, 'Explaining Ocean Warming: Causes, Scale, Effects and Consequences'; and

ACKNOWLEDGING that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises the need to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:

ENCOURAGES IUCN State and Government Agency Members and non-governmental organisation Members to:

- a. recognise the important role of marine and coastal ecosystems in climate change, as natural carbon sinks;
- b. recognise the role that marine protected areas play in both climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the importance of preserving marine and coastal ecosystems from climate change by promoting the establishment of coherent, resilient, ecologically connected, and efficiently managed networks of marine protected areas;

- c. take into account the results of the IPCC special report and the IPBES Global Assessment report that includes oceans;
- d. support understanding about coastal ecosystems and communities in order to help and engage local stakeholders, and help provide information to them in order to improve their integration of the ocean into local action plans, as needed;
- e. support the development of adaptation and mitigation projects linked to sound science and management for the adaptation of marine and coastal ecosystems, giving priority to the most vulnerable and valued regions and ecosystems as determined by States;
- f. consider using climate-related funding for projects for the protection and sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, the latter being the main natural carbon sinks;
- g. take oceans into account during the organisation of various international conferences; and
- h. support the Ocean and Climate Platform and develop a mechanism within the IUCN membership for review and potential participation in the dissemination of its messages at all levels.