



Topline messages from the Virtual Ocean Pavilion at UNFCCC COP30

© Rodrigo Thome

Ocean-climate action has never been more urgent. A key goal of the Virtual Ocean Pavilion is to communicate clear, bold messages to as many people as possible. The COP30 Virtual Pavilion topline messages were co-developed in collaboration with 27 partner organizations and input from the wider ocean community, with assistance from [Communications INC.](#)

This is a decisive moment. With the ocean at the center, COP30 must launch a new era for climate action. We need to shift from promises to action, and the ocean is at the heart of this shift.

The COP30 Virtual Ocean Pavilion Team invites attendees to consider, share, and, where possible, act upon the following key messages.

- 1. *Stakeholders should recognize the ocean as the greatest ally in combatting climate change; it is at the frontline of the climate crisis and a force for climate solutions:*** COP30 is being held in the Amazon, a region that serves as a global carbon sink. Ocean ecosystems – from mangroves to the deep sea – are likewise vital to our climate future and integral to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Protecting, sustainably managing, and financing ocean and coastal ecosystems is essential to limit warming to 1.5°C, safeguard biodiversity, support communities, and build climate resilience.
- 2. *COP30 should accelerate the ocean implementation era:*** COP30 will mark the completion of the first full cycle of the Paris Agreement. Implementation must now be the priority. From Blue Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and finance to the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogues and adaptation targets, ocean-climate action must move from talk to implementation, with transparency, accountability, and equity at its core.

- 3. Youth voices should be placed at the forefront of ocean, climate, and biodiversity initiatives:** Youth and future generations will bear the most significant impacts of climate change. Inclusive implementation processes must be fostered to encourage intergenerational dialogues. The historic lack of transparency and inclusivity in climate negotiations and decision-making processes must be addressed to resolve persistent equity issues. Traditionally underrepresented communities, including youth, must have a seat at the table. Through targeted engagement and partnerships, the Virtual Ocean Pavilion is committed to highlighting youth voices this year.
- 4. Ocean finance is climate finance and should be scaled up now:** Ocean-based climate solutions remain drastically underfunded. To meet the USD 1.3 trillion annual climate finance target, the ocean must be fully integrated into national climate plans, including the Loss and Damage Fund, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, and the Standing Committee on Finance. COP30 must mobilize finance for ocean action that is nature-positive, people-centered, and science-backed.
- 5. Countries should leverage Blue Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to accelerate ocean-climate action:** Although ocean-based climate measures remain underrepresented in national climate strategies, the Blue NDC Challenge launched at the third UN Ocean Conference shows growing momentum for integrating the ocean into climate action. COP30 must accelerate this by urging all countries to include measurable, science-based ocean targets in their 2025 NDCs, co-designed with non-state actors. These include:
- Sustainably managing, conserving and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems and the carbon cycle services they provide;
 - Scaling up responsible marine renewable energy;
 - Phasing out offshore oil and gas production;
 - Decarbonizing and adapting maritime industries like shipping, coastal tourism, value and supply chains of aquatic food production; and
 - Fostering sustainable, climate-resilient fisheries and aquaculture.
- 6. Marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR also known as ocean-based Carbon Dioxide removal or oCDR) should not be a distraction from proven ocean-climate solutions:** Unproven mCDR approaches could pose significant risks to biodiversity, global ocean health, and livelihoods. These technologies currently lack sufficient understanding, governance, oversight, and monitoring, and could do more harm than good. The precautionary principle must apply: mCDR approaches should not be considered viable ocean-based climate solutions until their risks are fully understood, regulated, and managed. COP30 must prioritize investment in nature-based, scientifically proven ocean solutions.
- 7. The ocean-climate-biodiversity community should jointly support the Ocean Breakthroughs, which chart a clear course to 2030 for nature, climate and people:** The Ocean Breakthroughs present five science-based, achievable tipping points for 2030 to achieve system transformation in the five sectors of marine conservation, offshore renewable energy, sustainable shipping, aquatic food systems, and coastal tourism. COP30 must leverage existing initiatives, united under the umbrella of the Ocean Breakthroughs, to accelerate ocean-based climate action.

8. *A united ocean-climate-biodiversity agenda is essential – and multilateralism is key:* Ocean action cannot be siloed. The ocean creates a “blue thread” across climate and biodiversity agendas and is critical to both the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework. COP30, as a “Nature COP,” must build synergies across the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), and others to advance ocean-based climate action.

Aligning goals and indicators, leveraging integrated solutions, and enhancing institutional coordination across biodiversity and climate frameworks will establish policy coherence and maximize impact. Strong multilateralism, including support for developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), is an opportunity to drive collective progress.

9. *National government agencies, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders should urgently prepare to implement the BBNJ Agreement, a pivotal treaty relevant to global climate and ocean governance:* Covering nearly half the planet and home to vast carbon sinks, the high seas are critical to regulating Earth’s climate. The BBNJ Agreement represents a historic opportunity to protect these areas and advance ocean-climate action. Now that the Agreement has reached the required threshold of ratifications and will enter into force on 17 January 2026, States and relevant stakeholders must rapidly begin preparation for implementation to unlock the Agreement’s full potential for ocean-climate action.

The BBNJ Agreement enables the creation of marine protected areas and environmental safeguards in areas beyond national jurisdiction. By conserving marine biodiversity and protecting carbon-rich ecosystems, it strengthens the ocean’s capacity to absorb carbon and buffer climate impacts. COP30 is an opportunity to accelerate the Agreement’s entry into force and implementation as a key pillar of global climate action.

10. *A just transition should put ocean-reliant communities first:* A just transition should include the ocean. This means securing food systems, livelihoods, and cultural heritage across coasts and islands, especially for SIDS, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. COP30 should amplify their leadership and ensure their access to finance, local knowledge, capacity-sharing, and decision-making.

For any questions on the topline messages, please contact [Travis Aten](#), Communications INC, [Catie Mitchell](#), Global Ocean Forum, [Thecla Keizer](#), Plymouth Marine Laboratory, or [Will Steen](#), Ocean Generation, of the COP30 Virtual Ocean Pavilion Team.