

## Report on Satellite Event: "Supporting a Global Collective Vision for Ocean Science by Matching Regional Priorities"

11 April 2024 - 8:30 - 9:45 CEST - [CCIB](#) Barcelona – Baltic Sea Room (122-123) - 2024 Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, Spain

This satellite event at the 2024 Ocean Decade Conference brought together representatives from various organizations to present their strategies for aligning ocean science regional priorities with the [Ocean Decade Vision 2030](#). Key initiatives presented included those by the European Marine Board (EMB), IOCAFRIKA, IOC-WESTPAC, IOCARIBE, IOCINDIO, and the Southern and Arctic Ocean Task Forces. Sheila Heymans, Executive Director of the European Marine Board moderated the event.



From [IOCAFRIKA](#), Edwin Mwashinga, Program Associate at UNESCO/IOC Sub Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States outlined the [Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap](#), emphasizing its nine priorities, its alignment with the Vision Papers, and the establishment of an umbrella programme called “Science and knowledge for a resilient and sustainable ocean economy in Africa (SEAWARD Africa)” with four pillars and cross-cutting components to facilitate its implementation. These are 1) sustainable management of marine resources, 2) climate change and marine biodiversity, 3) tackling pollution for enhanced human health, and 4) extreme events and disaster risk reduction. His presentation is available [here](#).

From [IOC WESTPAC](#), Aileen Tan Shau Hwai, First Vice Chairperson of UNESCO/IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific & CEMACS, Malaysia highlighted that different States got together in partnership to deliver knowledge and services to serve the needs for ocean sustainability. Their priorities include ocean and climate change, marine biodiversity and seafood security, and ocean ecosystem and human health. The UN Ocean Decade efforts in the region kicked-off in 2021 with high-level commitments and active participation from youth. In addition, IOC WESTPAC assumed the function as Decade Collaborative Office for the region, and will soon have the [2<sup>nd</sup> UN Ocean Decade Regional Conference](#) on 22-25 April 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand. Her presentation is available [here](#).

From [IOCARIBE](#), John Cortinas, Vice Chair of UNESCO/IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions & NOAA, USA presented their programmes aimed to improve the state of oceanography within the region, all linked to the Ocean Decade outcomes and challenges, with focus on capacity development and ocean literacy, ocean observing priorities, establishing impact-based Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems and Services and data information management and co-design. His presentation is available [here](#).

From [IOC INDIO](#), Justin Ahahanzo, UNESCO/IOC Regional Liaison Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and Africa emphasized that the Indian Ocean is the most populated region. They support coordination for the Ocean Decade, and recently had a workshop to analyze the 10 Ocean Decade challenges and to review them in the context of the Indian Ocean. Their recommendations focus on capacity development, empowering youth and women to drive ocean initiatives, co-designing programs with local communities, rebuilding data programs, and aligning regional activities, all build on existing capacity. The latest development was the IOC agreement to evolve from a regional committee to an IOC Sub-Commission, which now includes commitment from countries. His presentation [here](#).

On behalf of the [Southern Ocean Task Force](#), Anton Van de Putte from the University Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium reminded the participants that the Southern Ocean is governed by the Antarctic Treaty, and emphasized the linkages between the Antarctic and the rest of the planet. He presented the evolution of the Southern Ocean UN Decade Process, from a Task Force which developed the [Southern Ocean Action Plan](#), to a Decade Collaborative Center. He highlighted the alignment of the Ocean Decade challenges with the 7 working groups and the cross-cutting themes, and emphasized the key knowledge gap of understanding the role of sea ice in Earth's climate and the unique ecosystem and biodiversity of the Southern Ocean. His presentation is available [here](#).

On behalf of the [Arctic Ocean Task Force](#), Heidi Kassens, Chair of Marine Working Group at the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) & GEOMAR, Germany pointed out the challenges of the Arctic region, and that the Arctic research community published the [Ocean Decade Arctic Action Plan](#) in 2021. She highlighted the involvement of a diverse group of experts, including Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) and indigenous people. She mentioned the submission of a proposal for an Arctic Regional Programme to provide a coordinating office, and the strategic plan the IASC Marine Working Group to implement the Action Plan, which outlines the research challenges and organizational challenges, and the alignment with the Ocean Decade challenges. She finalized by informing about the [Fourth International Conference for Arctic Research Planning](#) in 2025. Her presentation is available [here](#).

From [European Marine Board](#), Gilles Lericolais, Chair of European Marine Board & Ifremer, France summarized the main recommendations of the [6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Navigating the Future series](#), the compass for future ocean science in Europe. He mentioned that all recommendations were aligned to address the Ocean Decade challenges and that the aim of the document is to connect ocean science with the main challenges of the world, mainly ocean and people, climate, fresh water and biodiversity. His presentation is available [here](#).



From left to right: Gilles Lericolais, Edwin Mwashinga, Aileen Tan Shau Hwai, Justin Ahahanzo, John Cortinas, Heidi Kassens, Anton Van de Putte and Sheila Heymans

During the discussion, speakers emphasized the integration of local and indigenous knowledge into ocean science initiatives, highlighting the importance of community engagement and co-designing solutions with coastal communities. Capacity building emerged as a key theme, with a focus on empowering youth and

fostering leadership within local stakeholders. Participants stressed the societal relevance of scientific research and the need to redefine economic and promotional systems to incentivize science that benefits communities. Empowering Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) through mentorship and active engagement was also highlighted as essential for driving impactful ocean science endeavours.

The satellite event underscored the importance of aligning regional priorities with the Ocean Decade Vision 2030. Through collaborative efforts and engagement with diverse stakeholders, ocean science initiatives will drive impact to address global challenges effectively.