



Q-quatics

FishBase and other stories at UNOC3

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23rd FishBase-SeaLifeBase Symposium, Brussels, 2 and 3 September 2025



UN Ocean Conference 2017 - recognise SDG 14

Fiji and Sweden teamed up to host the first UN Ocean Conference in New York, 2017

It was all about drawing more attention to the urgency of protecting the ocean and stimulating action towards the implementation of the new SDG 14 'Life Under Water', included in Agenda 2030 after much controversy.

NB Isabel Lövin, former MEP influential in the reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy, was a driving force as Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden





UNOC 3 took place in Nice, France, 9-13 June 2025

UNOC 3 was co-hosted by Costa Rica and France,
preceded by the One Ocean
Science Congress

The explicit aim was to place the ocean at the center of the global political agenda and accelerate action-oriented commitments from governments, companies, civil society and philanthropy for more investment into SDG14 goals. Investment is not only a matter of \$\$, but engaging people beyond technocratic proposals.





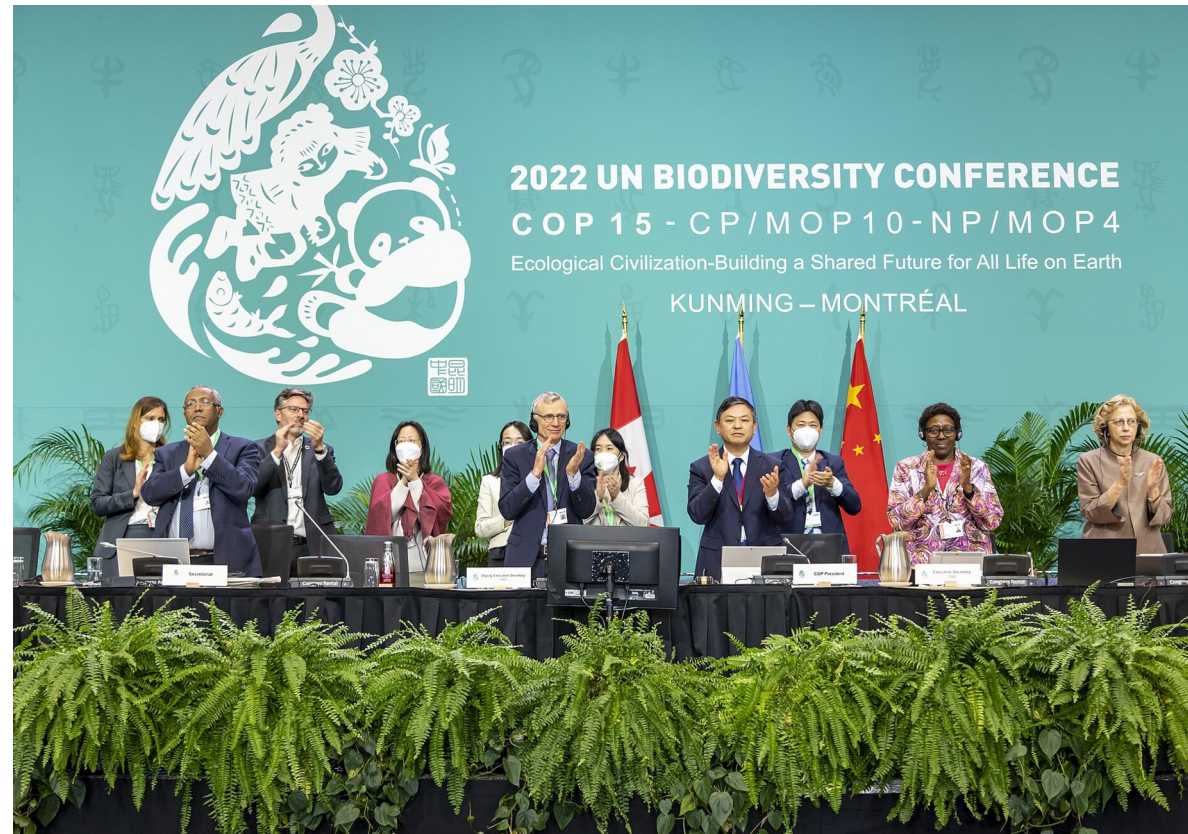
Global Biodiversity Framework to succeed Aichi Targets

GBF: 3 Areas with 23 Targets

- 1) Reducing threats to biodiversity.
- 2) Meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing.
- 3) Tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming.

Target 3, the provision for states to protect 30% of land and sea areas by 2030 requires states to stop subsidizing activities that destroy wilderness, such as mining and industrial fishing.

The concept of 'nature-positive' implies recovery by 2050 as societal goal.



(Adoption of the not legally binding GBF on 22 December 2022)



BBNJ Treaty nears entering into force

The future legally binding High Seas Treaty under the Law of the Sea agreed in 2023 with provisions for implementing the 30x30 objective and benefit sharing with less technologically developed countries is critical for overall regeneration of marine biodiversity. There are currently 139 signatories and 53 parties.

Article 68(1) reads as follows: "This Agreement shall enter into force 120 days after the date of deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession".



(Photo: Andy Schmid, UN World Ocean Day 2023 photo contest)



Connecting global agreements with local action

The evidence is piling up that

a) hard-won international agreements and their underlying principles will not automatically translate into changed practices

b) scientific insights are important, but not enough to trigger the regenerative action urgently needed for marine biodiversity and their ecosystems

c) connecting these to people's lives, their fears and hopes and building - local - capacity for collective action are crucial for implementation



Starting with the agency of individuals and expanding to increasingly larger groups



Collecting views from the public

In the public zone of UNOC we offered several opportunities to express views, experiences, and suggestions for action around what we called 4 Blue Notebooks with SDG related questions, amplified through postcards in several languages. Together with partners, including Q-quatics we had such a side-event accepted in three occasions.

We amplified that with the website.

Notebook 1:

The Ocean and Its People

Context:

The ocean is home to millions of species, supports coastal communities, and provides food, oxygen and climate regulation. However, its health is often compromised by short-term decisions. Coastal areas are under pressure due to urbanization, tourism, and climate change. Coastal communities, including small-scale fishers and indigenous peoples, need a voice so that stewardship and benefits are fairly shared using also science and local ecological knowledges.

Related SDGs: 3, 11, 13, 14, 15



2025 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE
June 2025, France

Valencian Fisherwomen
Joaquín Sorolla, 1903



Bundesministerium
für Umwelt, Naturschutz
und Reaktorsicherheit





Inviting action-oriented responses

Question 2: How can we balance ocean exploitation with recovery and conservation?

Respondents identified opportunities from their respective circumstances, but also roadblocks that need to be overcome, particularly:

- Concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few with strong influence on governments
- They often believed to be powerless vis-à-vis these lobbies and corporations

Notebook 2:

The Ocean and Its Diversity

Context:

The ocean is a vast and largely unexplored ecosystem, yet it faces threats such as overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and deep-sea mining. The High Seas, which cover 64% of the ocean, remain unregulated. Recovery of ocean health, responsible fisheries and marine protection are essential to maintaining biodiversity and safeguarding ocean services for all. Research has already generated insights e.g. in the benefits of the ecosystem approach to fisheries, but needs to be shared more widely through ocean literacy and respecting indigenous knowledges.

Related SDGs: 9, 10, 12, 14, 16



2025 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

June 2025, France



Fishing Boats
Vincent Van Gogh, 1883



Change is possible

The afternoon at the UNESCO pavilion e.g. generated good responses to the questions and to more opportunities for action through the use of the FishBase Guide app, the role play 'Protecting Blue Horizons' for making an MPA work in practice, and emotionally engaging stories around research results.

Some follow-up shows what is possible, when people engage, collaborate, invest in personal, professional and institutional capacities.





Call to action

- Meanwhile, in the Blue Zone reserved for Government officials, a side event showcased collaboration of SSF with researchers from UBC. It articulated clear demands for SSF involvement in ocean governance
- Changing the narrative: government representatives e.g. from Costa Rica, Madagascar were supportive
- Build **broadier coalitions** - this requires rights-based approaches, willingness to learn, recognise women as equals.
- Focus on meeting basic needs of people and nature.





Thanks for your attention

Looking for more collaboration to further increase positive impact for people and planet

More Info:

www.q-quatics.org - www.mundusmaris.org

