



2021  
2030  
United Nations Decade  
of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

2<sup>nd</sup> UN Ocean Decade Regional Conference  
11<sup>th</sup> WESTPAC International Marine Science Conference  
“Accelerating Ocean Science Solutions for Sustainable Development”  
22–25 April 2024, Bangkok, Thailand; <https://www.iocwestpac2024.com>

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## WESTPAC ECOP/MCOP STATEMENT

Our ocean poses great importance for the global community, but the ocean today presents a sobering reality of prevailing deterioration, degradation, and destruction. Impacts of climate change, widespread pollution, overfishing, and marine habitat loss have synergistically put immense pressure on the marine ecosystems that could unhinge the delicate balance of life within the ocean. These challenges may not just affect the ecosystems but could by far-reaching impact human communities, with over 1.9 billion people depending on the ocean for food, ecosystem services, livelihoods, and cultural identity.

The Western Pacific Region are home to more than 75 percent of all known coral species in the world, 3,000 fish species and the greatest extent of mangrove forests among all regions in the world. Ultimately, we are the custodian of the maximum marine biodiversity hotspot. We believe that there is a hope for our ocean and the region will be able to meet and raise above these challenges through concerted global actions, innovative solutions, and strengthened region-wide collaboration to mitigate and adapt to impacts of climate change, reverse ecosystem degradation, and restore the health and resilience of our marine ecosystems.

Recognizing the critical role of in advancing ocean science and sustainable ocean management, we, the Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP) and Mid-Career Ocean Professionals (MCOP) representatives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> UN Ocean Decade Regional Conference, hereby declare our commitment to:

*Accelerate* the **advancement of ocean science** through research, experimentation, data collection, ocean monitoring and observing, modelling and any other forms of knowledge generation to **provide evidence-based policy advice** to all levels of governance and ocean communities.

*Acknowledge* the importance of **capacity building** and **mentorship to ECOPs** to create the next generation ocean science community that are able to inherit, succeed, and further advance the ocean science in the Western Pacific Region. Therefore, investing in ECOP and MCOP professional development such as mentoring, trainings, research

resources, and other necessary needs that are important to empower them to become future leaders.

*Call on* governments to uphold their **commitments to Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water** to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for



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sustainable development. Governments must revisit the 10 targets of SDG and the 10 Ocean Decade Challenges to focus their attention and efforts to meet the targets by 2030.

*Communicate* ocean science to the **general public** to raise awareness and inspire actions, driving policy change through advocating for evidence-based policies to policymakers, and enhance **communication between ECOPs/MCOPs** in the region to share experiences and co-learn. We recognize the challenges of **language barriers** across regional countries and endeavor to communicating with respect, succinctly, and a genuine desire to comprehend and collaborate effectively.

*Support* all forms of **citizen engagement activities** including ocean literacy, science communication, citizen science, arts and sports for ocean activities to **foster deeper connection** to the ocean among the broader public and **inspire action** that will drive positive change for ocean health.

*Promote* **inclusivity** and **diversity** among the ECOP and MCOP from all backgrounds and genders are provided with equal opportunities and representations.

*Recognize* that achieving the goals of the Ocean Decade requires **sustained commitment** and **collaboration** across ECOP/MCOP and ocean science community. We pledge to continue working together, across borders and disciplines ocean science to achieve these goals.

*Explore* a **mechanism** with IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) Office to **mainstream ECOP/MCOP efforts and actions** towards contributing to the Ocean Decade in the region.

**25 April 2024**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**