

Senior Government Officials' Statement
Ocean Science Development and Cooperation for Sustainable Development
in the Western Pacific and Adjacent Areas

(Adopted on 12 March 2025)

1. We, the senior government officials from across the Western Pacific, convened at the [15th Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific](#) (WESTPAC) in Tokyo, Japan, on 12 March 2025, to **underscore** the critical importance of advancing ocean science¹ development and fostering cooperation for the sustainable development of our region.
2. **Recognizing** that the ocean, seas and coastal areas in the Western Pacific and its adjacent areas are vital to the health, livelihoods, and prosperity of people in the region and beyond, as they constitute a major influence on regional and global climate, the epicenter of the world marine biodiversity, a significant contributor to the world's seafood supply, and major shipping routes in the world maritime transportation. **However**, they face significant threats from escalating human activities, including climate change, extreme weather and ocean events, pollution, biodiversity loss, irreparable harm to coral reef and other ecosystems, and resource depletion.
3. **Further recognizing** that ocean science and knowledge are essential for providing solutions to sustainable development and supporting the effective implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 14: Life below water and SDG 13: Climate action, as well as other international agreements and frameworks, such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the recently adopted Agreement on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), and the ongoing international negotiation on a global plastic treaty.
4. **Considering** the interconnectedness of our ocean and the shared responsibility of nations to protect marine resources, **we stress the urgent need** to strengthen ocean science development and cooperation in the region. Such efforts will underpin evidence-based policy and decision-making, foster innovation, leverage emerging technologies, and build capacity across our region.
5. The value of **"ocean science for society"** lies at the heart of our approach in the region. **We emphasize** that ocean science must serve as a powerful tool to address societal challenges, improve the livelihoods of coastal communities, accelerate informed decision and policy, and support inclusive, sustainable development. By aligning ocean science with societal needs, we aim to deepen the connection between scientific research and the well-being of our people.
6. **We reaffirm** the aspirations outlined in the [Jakarta Statement on the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development \(2021-2030\)](#), adopted by Senior Government

¹ The term 'ocean science' encompasses natural and social science disciplines, including interdisciplinary topics; the technology and infrastructure that supports ocean science; the application of ocean science for societal benefit, including knowledge transfer and applications in regions that are lacking science capacity; and the science-policy and science-innovation interfaces. It considers the land-sea, ocean-atmosphere, and ocean-cryosphere interactions. Ocean science recognizes, respects and embraces local and indigenous knowledge.

Officials in 2023. That Statement outlines joint efforts to achieve ‘the Science We Need for the Ocean We Want.’

7. **We acknowledge** the significant contributions of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) in advancing ocean science and cooperation across the region. WESTPAC has been playing a pivotal role in fostering ocean science collaboration, capacity building, and the development of region-specific initiatives to address critical ocean challenges.

Call to Action

8. In response to these shared challenges and the pressing need to meet national and international commitments, we endeavor to advance ocean science development and cooperation in the region through the following actions:
9. **Strengthening international collaboration** among Member States in the region to promote joint ocean research, co-develop actionable or tailored solutions, achieve sustainable ocean planning and management, and enhance engagement with, as well as increase support to WESTPAC to ensure the effective implementation of regional ocean science development strategies and programs, including its led Ocean Decade Actions.
10. **Fostering ocean science-policy-society interface** through participatory processes, meaningful partnerships, and active engagement of the relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of substantive ocean science solutions in the region, as exemplified by initiatives such as the Senior Government Officials Roundtable, the biennial WESTPAC Intergovernmental Session, and the triennial WESTPAC International Marine Science Conference.
11. **Building ocean research capacity** by sharing ocean technology and know-how, investing in capacity-building programs to train/empower scientists, technicians, and policymakers in ocean science, with a particular focus on emerging technologies such as remote sensing, ocean modeling, environmental DNA, and artificial intelligence; and supporting the Regional Training and Research Centers (RTRC) and their tailored programs and activities, i.e., centers of excellence, to serve as hubs for research, training, and innovation.
12. **Enhancing climate resilience** by conducting collaborative research on the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems, coastal communities, and ocean-related industries; and developing science-based solutions to enhance the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems, including nature-based approaches and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management.
13. **Combating marine pollution** by launching joint efforts to research, monitor, reduce, control, and prevent marine pollution from all sources, including plastic waste, emerging chemical contaminants, anthropogenic GHG emissions, and oil spills; and promoting innovation in waste management and circular economy practices to reduce land-based sources of marine pollution.
14. **Conserving marine biodiversity** by advancing research and monitoring to protect marine biodiversity, including identifying and managing ecologically significant areas; as well as supporting the establishment and effective management of marine protected areas (MPAs) and the development of other Area-Based Management Tools (ABMTs) or Other Effective

Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in line with international frameworks, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the International Agreement on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).

15. **Restoring degraded marine ecosystems** by promoting collaborative research on effective restoration techniques, sharing knowledge of successful restoration practices; and advocating for the integration of ecosystem restoration into national and international policies and frameworks.
16. **Facilitating** the exchange and dissemination of ocean data, information, practical knowledge, and expertise to foster collaboration among sectors and disciplines, improve disaster risk preparedness and response, and enable evidence-based decision-making and policy development.
17. **Promoting ocean literacy** by supporting ocean educational and cultural programs, public awareness campaigns, and initiatives that enhance understanding of the ocean's role in sustaining life on Earth; and facilitating collaboration with media, civil society, and the private sector to disseminate ocean science knowledge and build a shared commitment to ocean sustainability.
18. **Sharing** our achievements, good practices and lessons learned to contribute to addressing global challenges through active participation in and reporting at international ocean related conferences and meetings.
19. **We call upon** all stakeholders—governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector—to join us in advancing these actions. Through collaborative efforts, we aim to harness the potential of ocean science to address pressing challenges, ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources for current and future generations.
20. **We extend our sincere appreciation** to the Government of Japan for hosting and chairing the Senior Government Officials Roundtable in Tokyo on 12 March 2025.