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SAVING TODAY'S OCEAN AND
PLANING FOR THAT OF 2050

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Driven by their commitment to save the ocean, their international experience and their willingness to work together towards a **360° view, 2050 OCEAN**, a team of experts, scientists, and representatives of economists, associations and politicians convened on September 23, 2022 at La Saison Bleue initiative on the occasion of the 5th edition of the Forum Mondial de la Mer- Bizerte (World Sea Forum-Bizerte), in Tunisia; **with a view to develop a forward-looking roadmap on the Ocean in 2050 as well as a first Action Plan.**

In this year 2022, the Ocean, a fragile common good at the heart of the global system and of many global challenges, is now unprecedentedly high at the global agenda. Starting From the One Ocean Summit in Brest, the Our Ocean in Palau and the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon; through the WTO negotiations on environmentally harmful subsidies and UN negotiations on the high seas in New York and deep seas in Kingston; ample evidence has been provided on the urgency, the state of degradation and the threats to which the ocean is exposed.

Commitments have been expressed by some high level maritime stakeholders; and progress has been made, often under pressure from scientists, civil society, the most vulnerable populations, youth and non-governmental organizations. **However, the international community is still way far from having implemented a concerted plan of action, collective solutions and concrete responses.**

Nonetheless, the ocean remains in dire need of prompt action. Therefore, in order to slow down or reverse critical scenarios in a world of uncertainty and concurrent crises, **the upcoming United Nations conference on the Ocean, to be held in June 2025 in France jointly with Costa-Rica, will have to deliver on the aforementioned issues and push forward the relating global agenda.**

In 2050, the world population will reach 10 billion inhabitants. Half of us will be living less than 75 km from a coastline whose proximity will represent as many opportunities as threats. 80% of the world's population

will be living in the African and Asian continents, which are already suffering from a demographic explosion. **Economic and social development gaps as well as inequalities with the nations most vulnerable to environmental degradation will continue to grow.**

If the ocean partially contributes to limiting global warming, absorbing more than 25% of the CO₂ emitted each year by humans and more than 90% of the heat resulting from greenhouse gas emissions, **this immense ecosystem of the planet which already suffers severely, even irreversibly, is still going through global changes resulting from anthropogenic pressures** (climate change, unsustainable exploitation of resources, pollution, land take, etc.).

In addition to these crises affecting the marine environment, on the surface, at depth, and along the entire global coastline, **the Ocean is also the main stage for economic, strategic, energy and security competitions and conflicts.** This is illustrated, among other things, by the massive rearming of large national navies and by migration, particularly social and climate change-related ones, which are inevitable and devastating.

By 2050, the share of marine income in States' GDPs will have increased sharply. The European Union has pledged to eliminate net greenhouse gas emissions by that year and to strongly develop its production of marine renewable energies, particularly wind energy. **Nevertheless, the transition to a truly sustainable blue economy is slowly progressing, as evidenced by the appetite for the exploitation of resources in the high seas, in the seabed and in the polar zones, particularly in the Arctic.** Although the maritime transport industry is making efforts to decarbonize it in 2050, investments do not match the challenges. Moreover, the benefits of these important ocean revenues are still very inequitably distributed.

In 2050, 1 billion people living in low-lying coastal areas will have to or will consider displacement as a result of rising sea levels and flooding caused by tsunamis, hurricanes and typhoons. 10% of the world's commercial ports will be highly exposed to extreme events that will also affect ships and their crews at a cost of \$10 billion per year by 2050. A quarter of the world population, particularly in the least developed countries, will still not have a warning system adapted to local threats. Insurance premiums related to maritime activities and coastal life will have increased fivefold by that time.

As for water stress, the World Health Organization assures that it will affect four out of ten inhabitants, i.e. four billion people, by 2050. The desalination

market will then have more than tripled to an estimated value of \$50 billion per year.

Therefore, thanks to the presentation of several surveys and studies carried out with more than 500 key witnesses or stakeholders, in particular the one proposed by “le Plan Bleu pour la Méditerranée en 2050”, and to the review of economically and socially acceptable scenarios, modelling, hypotheses and paths of transition and sobriety initiated over the last few years; **we together reflected on the Ocean of tomorrow, that of 2050, its strengths and weaknesses, its opportunities and threats as well as on the actions to be implemented as a matter of urgency for a sustainable future favourable to living organisms.**

While implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14 (“Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”), **OCEAN 2050** sends a warning message to all stakeholders in the form of an urgent recommendation **for stronger international cooperation at all levels**. This “cooperation shock” seems all the more essential and urgent as national, sectoral and often exploitation-oriented approaches reinforce the “polarization shock” on a global scale, which makes a shared and solidarity-based vision of the Ocean as a common good increasingly complex.

We therefore call on States, international and non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, the environmental monitoring bodies, businesses, investors, users of the sea and civil society organizations to work together in order to build a safe and healthy ocean by 2050.

The present Bizerte Declaration, calling for a “cooperation shock”, highlights the determination of this **OCEAN 2050** team which will be accessible to all international actors whose expertise will help refine the scenarios in the different branches presented below. Under this framework, and building on a first set of the attached recommendations, the Bizerte World Sea Forum now intends to be a “forum for cooperation for the future of the Ocean” and to measure, at each of its annual editions, the progress made as well as the difficulties and obstacles to which the international community would not have been able to respond.

To this end, a first special report of the OCEAN 2050 Expert Team will be presented on the occasion of the 6th edition of the Bizerte World Sea Forum in September 2023.

Inspired by the shape of the starfish, based on the five major themes supported by the European Union under the framework of the Starfish Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030", the work of the **OCEAN 2050** Team will be organized around these five branches.



Branch 1 – Governance, Peace, Justice and Security

- Establishing political and technical governance of the ocean and the cryosphere to enable operational, timely, inclusive and science-based decision-making.
- Adapting the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982) to issues that were not relevant when it was adopted 40 years ago: climate change and sea level rise, biodiversity, blue economy, submarine cables, human rights and sea user rights.
- Responding to the fragmentation of ocean governance and management by bringing together all ocean-related topics, tools and jurisdictions on the occasion of a structuring meeting in France in 2025 under the aegis of the United Nations and within the framework of SDG14.
- Recognizing the Ocean as a common good of world population under international treaties and regional seas conventions in order to mobilize individual and collective responsibility for protecting the Ocean and raise the question of the rights granted to the Ocean.
- Reaffirming the call for international law against the uninhibited use of force at sea.
- Paying special attention to the issue of climate justice.
- Encouraging, at the international level, all elected representatives and managers of maritime local authorities to convene in order to share their best practices in the field of land/sea relationship and to formalize the existence of a global coastal path.

- Establishing and supporting an education mission on ocean issues at all levels through curriculum development and awareness-raising, especially among the youngest, at local, regional and global levels through enhancing Ocean Literacy.

Branch 2 – Science, innovation and shared knowledge

- Stimulating a truly global scientific community, around an International Panel on Ocean Sustainability (IPOS) that will generate shared scientific findings whose first report, in close connection with the IPCC, IPBES and the World Ocean Assessment (WOA), will be published in 2025 on the occasion of the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC).
- Developing a digital twin of the Ocean, its climate and biodiversity to quickly fill the knowledge gaps needed for action and to nurture a global knowledge-sharing system.
- Fairly protecting and making the most of the marine genetic resources of the high seas through implementing an ambitious BBNJ agreement that will provide financing for international scientific cooperation, through convening the COP at the same time and in the same place as UNOC 2025.
- Submerging an international subsea station, a true research infrastructure, driven by the principles of equity and inclusiveness by 2050.
- Supporting, through research, the development of nature-based solutions and promoting biomimetics.
- Pushing forward innovation for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture by enrolling in sustainability science to accelerate the transition of these economic sectors.
- Promoting "Sustainability Solutions Science" approaches involving researchers from several disciplines, non-academic stakeholders, in particular vulnerable populations, and which take into account the social impact of the various scenarios considered.

Branch 3 – Protection, regeneration and adaptation

- Reversing the protection paradigm and building on the precautionary principle, by making ocean protection the norm and ocean exploitation the exception, and by creating marine protected areas, including in territories that are of crucial importance to our planet such as Antarctica, in the high seas, or in the deep sea.
- Enhancing experience-sharing, solutions' hybridization and equitable financing of the projects on adaptation of coastal territories to erosion and sea level rise.

- Increasing national navies' and ship-owners' investment in climate and biodiversity issues in terms of monitoring and control; scientific research; support to climate risk resilience and exemplary environmental standards.
- Establishing and enforcing an ecosystem-based, dynamic and adaptive approach to fisheries, prohibiting bottom trawling in protected marine areas, unless there is scientific motif for doing so.
- Intensifying efforts to put an end to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) in line with SDG 14 and eliminating all subsidies contributing to overfishing and IUUF.
- Putting an end to subsidies harmful to the ocean, including subsidies to fossil energy, and stop their exploitation by 2050.
- Making saving coral reefs a strong global cause.

Branch 4 – Fighting against all forms of pollution

- Putting an end to plastic pollution through an ambitious Global Treaty on Plastic Pollution by 2025, which will enable reducing plastic consumption, eliminating toxic and non-recyclable single-use plastic products and boosting the plastic circular economy under the Global Commitment.
- Putting an end, by 2040, to the dumping of untreated chemical pollutants from agriculture, people and watershed infrastructure.
- Developing clean environmental performance indicators for the blue economy, combining energy intensity, carbon intensity and impact on biodiversity.
- Harmonizing the environmental labels applied to the maritime sector.
- Accelerating programs and action plans for the remediation of coastal hot-spots, particularly coastal dumpsites.

Branch 5 - Sustainable Blue Economy and Finance

- Integrating the consideration of climate issues into the investment projects of all stakeholders in blue economy.
- Increasing the share of marine renewable energies in energy mix by affirming approaches to sobriety and protection of marine ecosystems, and ensuring the energy autonomy of island territories.
- Farming the ocean through developing sustainable aquaculture and algoculture, while taking into account their environmental impact and involving indigenous people and knowledge.

- Supporting the sector of low-carbon hydrogen and its derivatives, which are the vectors of maritime decarbonization and territorial energy autonomy.
- Reducing GHG emissions from maritime transport in the short term by adopting reduction measures that can be replicated by 2025 (regulating ship speeds, enhancing energy efficiency), by developing alternative propulsion modes (wind power, hybridization), and by using low-carbon fuels.
- Reducing the environmental footprint of submarine communication cables and using them to increase knowledge of the seabed.
- Supporting and incentivizing the financing of projects for the protection and restoration of carbon sequestering ecosystems, including mangrove forests that contribute to mitigating climate change without undermining the goal of a net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Developing mechanisms for financing the adaptation of coastal cities and territories in the long term, thus enabling adaptive and integrated management that meets the principles of social justice and equity.
- Measuring the carbon footprint of beach, coastal, recreational and cruise tourism and developing indicators of sustainable development of these activities, including effects on pollution, energy, cultural changes and benefits to local communities.

OCEAN 2050

Under the aegis of:

- Rym Benzina, *Président of la Saison Bleue*
- Pascal Lamy, *Président du Forum Mondial de la Mer de Bizerte*

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