



OCTAssociation

ASSOCIATION OF THE OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

PAYS ET TERRITOIRES D'OUTRE-MER

LANDEN EN GEBIEDEN OVERZEE

OVERSØISKE LANDE OG TERRITORIERS

OCT Declaration on Ocean

The Overseas Countries and Territories associated with the European Union,

Are large Oceanic Territories. With a combined Exclusive Economic Zone of more than 17 million km², Oceans are of strategic importance for OCTs. Their existence and their survival are inseparably linked to the Oceans for food, livelihoods, water, oxygen, climate, socio-economic growth and culture. Oceans shape the identity of OCTs;

Mindful that Humanity and next generations rely on Oceans. Oceans are also drivers for sustainable economy, growth and are cornerstones in sustaining people's welfare. They are also the vector of social and cultural values;

Being aware that with growing human populations and activities, Oceans are suffering from pollution (including marine litter), overexploitation, coastal degradation and the effects of climate change;

Deplore warmer sea temperatures; more intense storms, a rising of sea levels; overfishing; loss of biodiversity; coral bleaching; ocean acidification; eutrophication and significant increased pollution with plastics, which can have an impact on human health;

Highlight that special care has already been given to Oceans, with more than 37% of water areas covered by Marine Protected Areas in OCTs;

Appreciate the greater awareness and the global efforts undertaken by the international community to keep a Healthy Ocean;

Recognise the importance to act individually and collectively, when appropriate with the support of Member States that have links with OCTs, and welcome global initiatives and commitments such as:

In 2015, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the Sustainable Development Goal 14, which is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources

In 2015, the Paris agreement¹ signed in the COP 21 of the UNFCCC

In 2019, the 25th conference of the UNFCCC entitled "BLUE COP" in Chile and the specific focus by the Host country on the link between climate change and Oceans

¹ The Kingdom of Denmark on behalf of Greenland, has made a territorial reservation on the Paris agreement, in order to ensure Greenland's opportunities for continued socio-economic development

OCT Declaration on Ocean

In 2021, the start of the UN Decade for Ocean Science for sustainable development in which actions will be coordinated by UNESCO

The current efforts of the United Nations to create a legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ);

Mindful of the common conclusions of the 17th OCTs-EU Forum in Tahiti signed on 1st of March 2019 in which the OCTs, the EU and the partner Member-States declared to find sustainable answers to increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, such as climate change, the management of the oceans, the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable energy;

Acknowledge the status and projections of the marine environment described in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s special report on Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate as well as in the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);

Recognise that at the level of all the OCTs associated with the EU, a Declaration on Ocean is a crucial opportunity to make commitments for “Healthy Ocean” and sustainable blue growth, it is an opportunity to develop efficient collaborations for the benefit of people and Oceans;

Have decided to reinforce their efforts and,

With the objective to conserve and sustainably use the environmental value of Oceans, to:

Strengthen human capacity and when appropriate develop further institutions and legislative frameworks on conservation and sustainable use of Oceans;

Work for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in order to secure the long-term functioning of ecosystems and the services they provide for future generations;

Contribute to the goal of stopping the loss of threatened species and the degradation of their habitats;

Take measures to identify, monitor and reduce pollution (both land-based and marine), in particular to reduce the use of plastics (notably single use). Reduce eutrophication and notably releasing nutrients in the environment, to maintain healthy and clean Oceans;

Mitigate the harmful impacts of climate change on Oceans and limit Ocean acidification, notably by taking commitments, when appropriate, in the spirit of the Paris agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

Conserve or where possible, increase, the resilience of ecosystems and develop local and regional capacities to restore degraded areas;

Use instruments of coastal and marine planning for an integrated, holistic, regional and local management of Oceans;

OCT Declaration on Ocean

Understand and limit the spread of invasive alien species;

With the objective to foster the economic value of Oceans and support a sustainable Blue Economy, to:

Define a sustainable productive ocean as an objective involving all blue sectors including fisheries and the valorisation of the co-products;

Provide support in the identification of innovative sectors of blue economy notably by using scientific research and where possible traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge, local knowledge as well as cooperating on, and facilitating their development including with sustainable financing mechanisms;

Use the precautionary principle in the development of new economic activities related to the sea, notably in the area of sea-bed exploration and exploitation and of biotechnologies;

Develop Blue skills to acquire the expertise to create or use products or processes related to the blue economy. Create new education schemes or integrate maritime aspects in existing programmes;

Reinforce the sharing of expertise and capitalise on projects led by the EU such as “GROW RUP” and be associated to calls dedicated to blue economy of the EMFF;

With the objective to stimulate the social value of Oceans, to:

Involve stakeholders in all projects of management or use of Oceans, acknowledge the role of the civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities included;

Raise citizen awareness notably through campaigns of sensitisation in school, public and private sectors;

Engage the business communities to be more active in conserving and sustainably manage Oceans;

Take into consideration where possible traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge, local knowledge and cultural aspects in the decision-making process;

Generate knowledge notably by reinforcing the means of acquisition of scientific evidence-based information;

Facilitate the availability of data and the diffusion of knowledge and good practices;

And with the aim to reach those three objectives, to:

Develop regional, European, global and inter-OCTs collaboration, with the support of Member-States having a link with OCTs:

Monitor the achievement of SDG14 at the territorial and regional level;

OCT Declaration on Ocean

Take a harmonised regional and territorial approach where applicable to improve the maritime monitoring (illegal fishing, pollutants, etc) using common protocols and shared technology while recognising the differences between the OCT's marine areas;

Cooperate between OCTs in the areas of marine research and innovation;

Promote human and institutional capacity to advance ocean governance and management by OCTs

Capitalise efforts by a coordinated involvement in international fora and act as ambassadors for Oceans;

Optimize the use of available EU funding, with a particular view on new opportunities that will be available in the EU programmes post 2020 which are of interest of Oceans and OCTs, notably EMFF; Horizon Europe and its mission on healthy Oceans, seas and inland water, Interreg, LIFE including BEST programme, COSME programmes, etc;

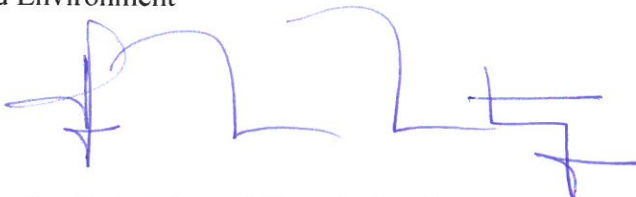
Closely follow European policy developments when appropriate, with a view of getting involved in future initiatives for Oceans.

Monitoring of progresses made on the implementation of this Declaration will be implemented during the ministerial conferences.

This Declaration does not, nor is it intended to, create any binding, legal or financial obligations under domestic or international law, and is subject where applicable to endorsement by individual OCT Governments.

Signed in Brussels on 16 October 2019

For the Delegation of French Polynesia, M. Heremoana Maamaatuaiahutapu, Minister of Culture and Environment



For the Delegation of French Southern and Antarctic Territories, Ms Mouna Chambon by delegation

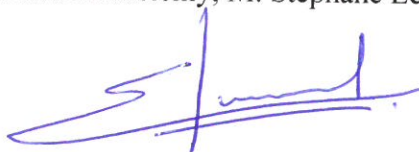


OCT Declaration on Ocean

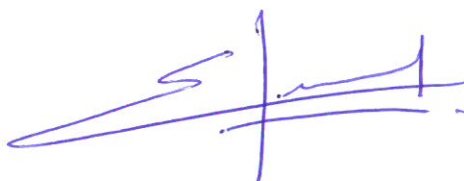
For the Delegation of New Caledonia, M. Thierry Santa, President of the Government



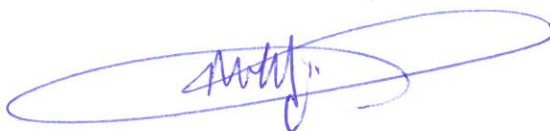
For the Delegation of Saint Barthélemy, M. Stéphane Lenormand by delegation



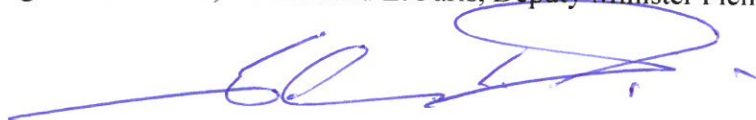
For the Delegation of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, M. Stéphane Lenormand, President of the Territorial Council



For the Delegation of Wallis et Futuna, M. David Vergé, President of the Territorial Assembly



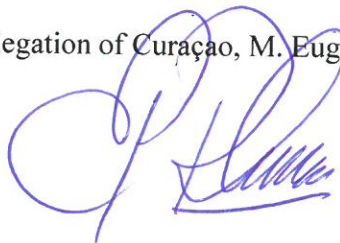
For the Delegation of Aruba, M. Edmond L. Paris, Deputy Minister Plenipotentiary



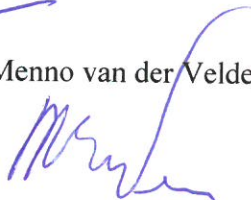
For the Delegation of Bonaire, M. Elvis Tijn Asjoe, Commissioner



For the Delegation of Curaçao, M. Eugene Rhuggenaath, Prime Minister



For the Delegation of Saba, Drs. Menno van der Velde, TAO



OCT Declaration on Ocean

For the Delegation of Sint Eustatius, M. Mervyn Stegers, Acting Government Commissioner



For the Delegation of Sint Maarten, Ms. Nikima Hickinson by delegation



For the Delegation of Falkland Islands, Hon. Roger Edwards, Member of the Legislative Assembly



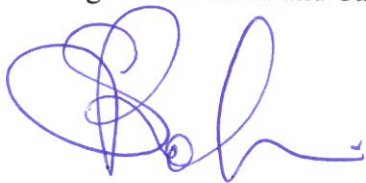
For the Delegation of Pitcairn Islands, M. Robin Shackell, Deputy Governor



For the Delegation of Saint Helena, Hon. Russell Yon, Member of the Legislative Council



For the Delegation of Turks and Caicos Islands, Hon. Sharleen Cartwright-Robinson, Premier



OCT Declaration on Ocean

[Pending approval]

For the Delegation of Anguilla

For the Delegation of Bermuda

For the Delegation of British Virgin Islands

For the Delegation of Cayman Islands

For the Delegation of Greenland

For the Delegation of Montserrat