



Virtual Oceans Action Day Towards UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow in Memory of Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain¹ Friday, 20 November 2020

SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

So much has happened since the momentous [Oceans Action Day at the UNFCCC COP25 in Madrid](#) when the ocean and climate change community looked forward to 2020 with so much hope and expectations given the oceans outcomes of COP25 and the cascade of ocean-related events slated for 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the revision of ambitious plans for 2020, the “super year” for the environment. Thus, Virtual Oceans Action Day (VOAD) 2020 was held as a non-COP preview of Oceans Action Day at COP26 in Glasgow in 2021.

Virtual Oceans Action Day 2020, which drew over 400 Participants, was held in memory of Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, founder and President of the Global Ocean Forum, who passed away in September. Biliana firmly believed in the importance of addressing the oceans and climate nexus in mitigating and adapting to climate change. She led the wide dissemination of information targeting decision-makers at the UNFCCC and beyond emphasizing the undeniable evidence of the importance of oceans, the central role the oceans play in regulating the climate system, and the dire consequences of inaction, especially through the organization of [Oceans Action Days at the COPs](#) and through the ROCA Initiative’s annual [reports](#) on Assessing Progress on Ocean and Climate Action.



Speakers at the Virtual Oceans Action Day

¹ Link to the VOAD 2020 recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5cAFY2zMAA&feature=youtu.be>; Link to the VOAD 2020 website: <https://roca-initiative.com/virtual-oceans-action-day-2020/>

Purpose of Virtual Oceans Action Day 2020

In addition to honoring Biliiana, VOAD 2020 aimed to: 1) take stock of progress on oceans and climate issues towards [UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow](#); 2) capture the outcomes of the discussions at the Ocean and Coastal Zones Thematic Group [Race-to-Zero November Dialogues](#) under the Marrakech Partnership held on 12 November 2020; 3) provide a platform in which climate and ocean leaders presented their visions and ambitions towards the virtual UNFCCC [SBSTA ocean and climate change dialogue to consider how to strengthen adaptation and mitigation action](#) to be held from 2 to 3 December 2020; and 4) share stories of how stakeholders in the global oceans and climate community have been responding boldly to COVID-19 and its disastrous impacts.

Organizers of VOAD 2020

VOAD 2020 was organized by the [Global Ocean Forum](#); [Ocean Policy Research Institute](#) of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan; [Oceano Azul Foundation](#), Portugal; [Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission](#) of UNESCO; [Ocean and Climate Platform](#); [Conservation International](#); [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#); and [Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation](#), in association with the [Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action](#).

VOAD 2020 consisted of the following high-level panels which all addressed the VOAD objectives: I. Overview of VOAD 2020 and honoring Dr. Biliiana Cicin-Sain; II. Vision towards UNFCCC COP26 Glasgow; III. Perspectives from intergovernmental organizations; IV. Perspectives from national organizations; and V. Perspectives from civil society (see Annex 1 for the VOAD 2020 Program). A Q&A segment followed each panel session. The virtual meeting was hosted by the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

This summary report contains the salient points delivered by the panelists as well as their responses to questions from VOAD participants. A sample of the tribute to Biliiana offered by panelists and participants are compiled at the end of this summary.

I. OVERVIEW OF VOAD 2020 AND HONORING OF DR. BILIANA CICIN-SAIN

Dr. Miko Maekawa, Senior Research Fellow, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation served as MC for VOAD, and welcomed all the participants.

Dr. Atsushi Sunami, President, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Dr. Sunami welcomed all participants and thanked all the partner organizations which collaborated in bringing together intergovernmental organizations, national governments, and civil society to maintain and scale-up the momentum of the ocean and climate agenda towards COP26 in Glasgow through the VOAD. He stated that:

- 1) In the conclusion of the Race-to-Zero Dialogues, it was reaffirmed that the world is facing an unprecedented transformation due to the COVID-19 situation and that tangible actions in alignment with the net-zero target have to be accelerated.
- 2) Given the information provided by the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, there is an urgent need to turn the tide for the stability and sustainability of the ocean and climate system.
- 3) A growing number of countries are heading towards net-zero emissions, including Japan and EU countries, and ocean-based mitigation measures have a significant role to play in achieving those targets and commitments.
- 4) He expected to hear discussions on envisioning what must happen in COP26 to meet the net-zero challenge as well as take-away inspiration, new ideas and motivation from the VOAD discussions.

Mr. Tiago Pitta e Cunha, CEO, Oceano Azul Foundation

Mr. Pitta e Cunha laid out the objectives of the VOAD, which included taking stock of achievements made in climate and ocean issues, especially within the UNFCCC. He mentioned that COP25 in Madrid allowed the debate on the ocean as an essential piece of the climate change puzzle to progress. He emphasized the need to realize how important ocean nature-based solutions are (e.g., Blue Carbon Guidelines) and that these have externalities that contribute to other national commitments (e.g., CBD, SDGs) and essential biodiversity contributions. He mentioned that the Oceano Azul Foundation, together with the Blue Carbon Initiative, published a guidance for countries about including blue carbon in NDCs.

He stated that ocean-based climate action is able to achieve several goals at the same time, including biodiversity restoration, coastal resilience and coastal security. He also noted the need for capacity-building and leadership in including the ocean in NDCs.

Mr. Richard Delaney, President and CEO, Center for Coastal Studies, GOF Board Member

Mr. Delaney gave an introduction to a video honoring Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, noting that he first met Biliana in 1990, when they established a group called ICO (International Coastal and Ocean Organization) - a global association of professionals and managers who were interested in the ocean. He said that ICO evolved under Biliana's leadership and hard work into the Global Ocean Forum. Having worked together on many projects, traveled many parts of the world, enjoyed dinners together and occasionally had a glass of wine or two, he became a very close friend of Biliana, like many others who have had the same privilege of working with her. He announced that the Global Ocean Forum will provide a place to carry on Biliana's lifelong work which is due in large part to the generous commitment of Dr. Miriam Balgos who will oversee the transition of the Global Ocean Forum during the next year. He asked participants to please remember to raise a toast to Biliana and her contributions whenever they find themselves at a post-conference with ocean colleagues.

[Video: In Memory of Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain](#)

VISION TOWARDS UNFCCC COP26

Mr. Gonzalo Muñoz, Chile High Level Champion for Climate Action for COP25

Mr. Muñoz noted that the Race-to-Zero Dialogues have been completed, including an Ocean and Coastal Zones day, which was the most watched (around 40,000 live viewers). He said this number showed the importance people place on oceans all around the world. He stated that the world is in a race to prevent global warming beyond 1.5°C. He also said that the ocean needs to function in a healthy way since it plays a central role in regulating climate and providing livelihoods and that the ocean therefore provides resources to limit global warming.

He noted the many opportunities for ocean action, including strengthening carbon storage capacities of coastal ecosystems, while restoring these ecosystems. He noted the potential for action in other ocean sectors including decarbonization in shipping (e.g., use of sustainable fuels) and in tourism. He mentioned that there are also many challenges, especially regarding adaptation, resilience and finance that need to be addressed in parallel.

Dr. Gemma Harper, Deputy Director for Marine, UK DEFRA, COP26 Presidency

Dr. Harper noted that despite so much change that has happened since the last Ocean Action Day in Madrid last year, the UK is still committed to taking ambitious ocean and climate actions. She said that a healthy ocean is essential for all lives, and that the ocean's health is closely linked to climate change. She noted that securing ambitious goals of GHG emission reduction at COP26 is critical to protect the ocean and avoid further irreversible impacts and that there is reason for hope and ocean optimism. She mentioned that at the Race-to-Zero Dialogues, she was inspired by others' commitment to reduce GHG emissions and by the Leaders' Pledge for Nature (committed to reverse the decline of biodiversity by 2030).

She mentioned that 2021 will see the CBD Parties agree on new targets and that the UK-led Global Ocean Alliance is calling for at least 30% of the ocean protected by 2030 (32 members). The year 2021 marks the start of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. She noted that as the incoming COP Presidency, the UK is putting nature at the heart of COP26 and that nature-based solutions can provide a third of cost-effective solutions needed right now. She mentioned that the UK is working to drastically increase the financial support for nature-based solutions and noted that under the Chilean presidency, COP 25 elevated the profile of the ocean and climate nexus.

Q&A: What do you think needs to happen in COP26 that did not happen in COP25?

- **Gonzalo Muñoz:** *The ocean is a topic of confluence. Hopefully, parties can collaborate much more and reach at 30% of what needs to be conserved worldwide. Regarding non-state actors, we have seen progress during this COVID year. There is a lot of potential including in blue carbon solutions and in decarbonizing the maritime industry. I think that we will be able to see the potential of the tourism sector to work towards preserving and be regenerating coastal zones.*
- **Gemma Harper:** *The UK is keen to engage with the Ocean and Climate Dialogue and to see what is going to come out of it. The UK Presidency, in partnership with Italy, sees the ocean at the heart of many of our COP priorities. It is mainly through our nature campaign that we are advocating for the role of nature-based solutions and the role of the ocean in tackling climate change, both in terms of adaptation and mitigation.*

PERSPECTIVES FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Dr. Joanna Post, Ocean and Climate Change Focal Point, UNFCCC

Dr. Post noted that the world is at a crossroads and that climate change is making the ocean more acidic. She stated that the ocean hosts the solutions. She discussed the forthcoming dialogues on oceans and climate as follows: The Blue COP gave the SBSTA Chair the mandate to host an Ocean and Climate Dialogue. It was meant to take place in June, which was not possible, and so it will take place online, in the evening European time. This dialogue will continue to expand the ocean momentum. There were 47 submissions of input to the Dialogue which were analyzed and summarized in the Information Note by the SBSTA Chair provided by the UNFCCC Secretariat. There are some key issues coming out of that Information Note. Several points have been made, including, among others: the importance of increasing actions, the importance of adaptation in terms of ecosystem-based actions. It is clear that there is already action under the UNFCCC. Considerations on how to increase national actions were taken into account by the SBSTA Chair. The Dialogues are the next steps in the way forward. Both COP Presidencies will be represented in the panel. The outcomes will be gathered together in an information note, hopefully as a basis for further work.

Dr. Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO

Dr. Ryabinin noted that the modern world suffers from inequality, manipulated information, terrorism and climate change. He stated that the world is going through the COVID pandemic which has led to the diminution of carbon emission in the short term. He stated the need to rely on science as a source of objectivity and transparency, which provides good solutions even for maintaining peace in the world. Noting that the climate community is on a long and winding road, he said the world has learnt its lessons and that there is now an understanding of the climate-science social contract. He described the contract to be one that not only informs the powers but also tries to do everything possible towards solutions and good actions.

He noted that ocean science might look complex, with ocean acidification, deoxygenation, genetic mutation triggered by environmental factors, all examples of the unique properties of the planet. He stated that this is the natural science that determines existing rules of procedure and that ocean governance based on social science is a key element of sustainable development. He stated that the world needs to move forward in basing action on science, including social sciences. He noted that through the UN Ocean Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the potential of ocean science, natural science and social science (including ocean governance) can be increased.

Prof. Manuel Barange, Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Prof. Barange noted that as he works for the UN agency that is in charge of ending poverty and hunger, it is his responsibility to support the sustainable use of ocean and coastal ecosystems for global food security and economic development. He stated that: Fish have the lowest carbon footprint among all the food commodities, while sustaining markets that are worth almost \$200 billion every year; fish consumption has been growing at twice the rate of population growth since the 1960s and it will contribute a bigger portion of the future food basket; and a third of our fisheries suffer from overexploitation and the aquatic systems they inhabit have been identified as some of the most vulnerable to climate change. He outlined the following responses to the situation, which he said have to be proactive, positive and human-centered.

1. Mainstream climate change into fisheries management, doing cross-sectoral approaches, holistic and precautionary approaches in order to tackle both challenges at the same time.
2. Develop transformative adaptation plans. Fisheries are already adapting but institutions need to adapt and need leaders to guide and to avoid maladaptation.
3. Develop more specific spatial management mechanisms in response to the fast and unpredictable pace of climate change; static solutions are bound to fail.
4. Negotiate trade-offs since climate change will result in an unequal distribution of benefits and losses. Multilateral mechanisms have to ensure that those trade-offs are done equally.
5. Invest in innovation by learning from the lessons of the COVID crisis in building back better for the ocean.

Prof. Barange noted that FAO is working to build a large partnership with companies, governments and civil society to develop coordinated responses in the context of a blue transformation vision. He explained that the vision starts with turning the ocean of problems to an ocean of solutions. All of the ocean must be well-managed and governed to be able to contribute to the nourishment and livelihoods of coastal communities and continue providing ecosystem services.

Q&A: What are the opportunities to harmonize the efforts with the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development?

- **Vladimir Ryabinin:** *The idea of the UN Decade of Ocean Science is to mobilize society. Through the inclusion of thousands of people, asking this very question, we will be able to implement the scientific solutions. This is the purpose of the Decade. We hope to achieve our target through communication, etc.*

PERSPECTIVES FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

H.E. Mr. Ricardo Serrão Santos, Minister of Maritime Affairs, Portugal

Minister Serrão stated the fundamental role that the ocean plays in planetary security and that it is a key in tackling the climate emergency. He noted that the complexity of the phenomena the world faces (e.g., sea-level rise, deoxygenation, weather, droughts, floods, disturbance of ocean productivity and now the pandemic) requires scientific information to support and negotiate informed political decisions. According to Minister Serrão, the main tool for dealing with the current situation is scientific knowledge and change in behavior. He noted that the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development was made possible with the ascendance of ocean in the international agenda. In the last five years, a new set of international initiatives and strategic documents incorporate the ocean as an objective and as a basis for action, upon which the work of Portugal is anchored - in particular the EU Green Deal and the UN 2030 Agenda. Minister Serrão recalled the words of UN Secretary General António Guterres, who said that countries need to act together to face the existential threat of climate disruption, which is much bigger than the threat of the pandemic. He noted that meetings such as the VOAD keep the momentum afloat and place the ocean in the center of climate action.

H.E. Ms. Helen Ågren, Swedish Ambassador for the Ocean, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Ambassador Ågren noted that the background document for the SBSTA Ocean and Climate Dialogue clearly shows how the ocean-climate nexus is handled both within and outside the UNFCCC process. She stated that ambitions must be raised everywhere. She noted that:

- Raising mitigation ambition in the NDCs and connecting it with the long-term strategies under the Paris Agreement is most important.
- Commitment by different sectors, including ocean-based industries is needed.
- Sweden, which aims to become climate neutral by 2045, provides examples of sectoral commitment to climate ambition, e.g., Fossil Free Sweden encourages businesses to draw their own roadmap for fossil free competitiveness; the maritime industry is aiming for fossil-free domestic shipping; development and deployment of offshore renewable energy (offshore wind and wave energy) has gained speed.
- The European Green Deal will be instrumental in the low-carbon transition.
- An integrated approach to ocean, climate and biodiversity in ODA and financing institutions is needed. The strategy of the Nordic Development Fund, which makes available 350 million Euros in catalytic funding for developing countries, stresses the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus.
- The existing natural mitigation potential of the ocean must be secured by minimizing all negative impacts of anthropogenic pressures. These adaptation measures can increase the resilience of marine ecosystems and secure erosion protection, food production and other ecosystem services.

- The ocean must be better protected: Nations should come to an agreement on BBNJ and agree to protect at least 30% of the ocean by 2030 at the CBD COP15; protection in Antarctica must be increased.

Mr. Taholo Kami, Special Representative for the Ocean Pathway, COP23 Presidency, Fiji

Mr. Kami recalled that ocean was one of the five priorities of Fiji's Presidency of COP23 in 2017. Fiji launched the Ocean Pathway together with Sweden to find the appropriate space for ocean in the UNFCCC process and Fiji remains committed to this process. As a team, with the Friends of the Ocean and Climate banner, they were able to shape the text and successfully lobby for a decision to have an ocean and climate dialogue within the UNFCCC in COP25. He stated that Fiji is looking forward to the dialogue and that the possibility that this could happen annually or every second year is something that Fiji would support.

Mr. Kami stated that COVID has been a wake-up call for small island states. Noting that FAO mentioned Blue Transformation, he stated that in the Pacific, they are talking about Blue Recovery, and how to make a sustainable ocean and sustainable ocean economies a reality and building resilience are a part of this.

Fiji is standing by the target of zero emissions by 2050, along with many of the countries in the Pacific. He noted that 30% protection and 100% management of the oceans are critical to achieving this.

Q&A: What can your country do for COP26 in relation to the ocean and climate nexus?

- **Ricardo Serrão Santos:** *The use of climate action is central in the government of Portugal. We are fully committed to, for example, decarbonization (carbon neutrality) and renewable energies (where the ocean can contribute). We are now planning the new ocean strategy for Portugal (2021 - 2030). It is inspired by the major governance frameworks. We believe that progress towards blue economy, marine conservation, decarbonization, etc. are central.*
- **Helen Ågren:** *We must continue to talk about raising ambitions and to join international initiatives. We support the NDC Partnership where we can collaborate on development and implementation of the NDCs, share experiences and support countries. It is really important to mobilize finance institutions. These are key issues we need to move forward on.*
- **Taholo Kami:** *We would agree on ambitious actions. I would like to raise two issues: avoiding the disinvestment in ocean action and ensuring the clarity of ocean action within the UNFCCC (what should we be looking for?). It is critical that countries provide leadership on these issues.*

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE CIVIL SOCIETY

Prof. Carol Turley, Plymouth Marine Laboratory

Prof. Turley spoke of how ocean science is doing under the pandemic. She noted that ocean science activities had to be postponed, but there are also some remarkable stories of how scientific endeavor has been kept alive. She gave the following examples:

- The research vessel Sir David Attenborough has been completed (first sea trial) ;
- The largest polar expedition has completed its expedition ;
- The British Antarctic Survey is working to keep Antarctica COVID-free ;
- An army of robotic floating boats will be monitoring global ocean health ;
- The Plymouth long-term observatory has kept going under the COVID pandemic ;
- The Plymouth Sound has received investments to observe all regions;

- The PML adapted fieldwork surveys to also look at the impacts of COVID-19 on resilience and climate change adaptation;
- Scientists continued to work towards the IPCC AR6 (virtually).

Ms. Sylvie Goyet, Advisor to the Vice President, Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation

Ms. Goyet challenged the participants to go further in setting ambitions in the climate agenda, focusing on the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus and looking at the solutions that will trigger both biodiversity gains and climate benefits. She acknowledged that a healthy ocean is one of the most important systems to regulate climate and help communities and welcomed the climate initiative led by the Nordic Development Fund.

Ms. Goyet stated that the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation is proud to have been associated with the Global Ocean Forum and many of the actors at the VOAD. She expressed her pleasure in hearing interest in a lasting Ocean and Climate Dialogue at the UNFCCC and pleased by the commitments of the COP26 Presidency - placing the ocean at the heart of climate actions.

She welcomed stronger linkages between the ocean, climate and biodiversity issues in terms of science (e.g. closer relationship between the IPCC and the IPBES), policy (e.g. Green Deal in all countries) and actions on-the-ground. She emphasized that: 1. The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation is putting great attention to nature-based solutions to address climate change and biodiversity loss. 2. Attention, science and action are called for in the coastal zones, which are at the interface of the sea and the land, an area of intense interactions and enhanced productivity and biodiversity.

She noted the urgent need for organizations to put pressure on governments, authorities and businesses for a deep sense of urgency in calling for shorter time frames to get things done, following the lead of great championing countries. She pledged, on behalf of the Foundation, to mobilize, advocate, and support these efforts.

Ms. Loreley Picourt, Secretary General, Ocean and Climate Platform, on behalf of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action: Ocean and Coastal Zones

Ms. Picourt recalled that the ocean and coastal zones has been one of the priority themes under the Global Climate Action since its creation at COP 22 in Marrakech. She noted that from 2016, the Global Ocean Forum, together with the Future Ocean Alliance and IOC-UNESCO as ocean and coastal zones co-focal points under the Marrakech Partnership facilitated ocean action under the UNFCCC, a legacy which civil society is keen to carry on.

Ms. Picourt noted that in June 2020, the Conservancy International and the Ocean and Climate Platform were elected as new ocean and coastal zones co-focal points under the Marrakech Partnership. She recalled the aim of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, which is to establish a dialogue between non-state actors and parties to the UNFCCC, with the overall objective to boost concrete solutions and stimulate innovative partnerships.

She stated that the co-focal points are very committed to achieving this objective and to align with broader actions of the UNFCCC, such as securing the role of marine ecosystems in providing solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change; further institutionalizing the ocean and climate nexus under the UNFCCC; reflecting on how to build synergies between the UNFCCC and other governance frameworks including the CBD. She noted that most of these topics will be addressed in the Ocean and Climate Dialogue.

Ms. Tamara Thomas, Director, International Ocean Policy, Conservation International, on behalf of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action: Ocean and Coastal Zones

Ms. Thomas highlighted some priorities for the co-focal points for ocean and coastal zones under the Marrakech Partnership:

- Consolidate and expand the ocean-climate community under the GCA which includes securing partnerships as well as reaching out to other types of actors, especially the private sector.
- Define key messages aligned with the work of the UNFCCC to be jointly conducted by the ocean and climate community.
- Amplify the voice of the ocean and climate fora and a need to ensure coherence in the ocean and climate narrative. To that end, there is a need to build on the support the ocean-climate community (science and political support).

Ms. Thomas stated that significant progress has already been made over the last years to raise the status of the ocean within the UNFCCC and that the SBSTA Ocean and Climate Dialogue will be yet another milestone towards continued progress. She noted the need to reflect on the goals and next steps of the ocean community.

Ms. Dorothée Herr, Manager, Oceans & Climate Change, IUCN

Ms. Herr noted that she and Kirsten Isensee of IOC-UNESCO are leading the development of the ocean and coastal pathway with stakeholder consultations. An executive summary of the pathway has been prepared but further input on the pathway is needed and invited until COP26. She noted that the pathway highlights urgency for transformational change in policy, science and industry, among others, before 2040. She stated that the ocean community has to become bigger and more diverse. She described the pathway as consisting of four key areas: conservation and restoration, natural resources management (coastal and ABNJ), shipping, and energy (adaptation and mitigation). She noted that they have been working closely with our colleagues from other pathways.

Mr. Philippe Vallette, Director-General, Nausicaá Centre National de la Mer, France

He stated that nothing can be done without the commitment of the citizens and that small actions can have meaningful impacts. He said that ocean literacy is important but it's not enough; people must feel they are committed to a common goal. He provided three examples from Nausicaá to illustrate the possibilities in terms of involvement of the civil society: 1. Forum for the Blue Society (tool for information exchange among people); 2. World Ocean Day (use existing networks, e.g. aquaria all over the world, to promote oceans); and 3. Youth Parliament for the Ocean (let's commit young people). He said that the COVID crisis is a disaster but it is a wake-up call for greater action.

SUMMARY OF OUTCOME MESSAGES

Key points to enhance ocean-based solutions towards net-zero by 2050:

- Promoting cross-cutting actions by multi-stakeholders;
- Strengthening synergies and cooperation between existing activities, networks and organizations - including inside and outside of UNFCCC;
- Raising public awareness on ocean and climate change nexus.

Next steps and opportunities in relation to the ocean and climate agenda:

- UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Dialogue;
- Marrakech Partnerships (Ocean and Coastal Zones Pathway);

- COP26 in Glasgow (2021) and beyond.

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Sunami thanked Biliana for bringing the oceans and climate change community together in this VOAD.

Mr. Pitta e Cunha highlighted that: 1) the visibility of the ocean is growing based on data on Race-to-Zero Dialogue viewers); 2) with the UK now putting nature at the heart of climate action, the financial support for nature-based solutions is increasing; 3) the private sector is playing a bigger role in climate action; 4) international organizations are pushing the ocean agenda forward; and) 5) the ocean must be incorporated in NDCs.

Annex 1. Virtual Oceans Action Day 2020 [Program](#).



Tribute to Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain from panelists and participants during the VOAD 2020

H.E. Ms. Helen Ågren: *We will remember Biliana as a passionate advocate for the oceans, a warm heart and a very inclusive personality. She is greatly missed and we will do our best to keep the ocean flag flying high.*

Prof. Manuel Barange: *Let me start by honoring Biliana, who dedicated a very good portion of her life to raise awareness of oceans in the world including in a climate change context. She worked with FAO in many forms and shapes over the years. She was a relentless and ambitious fighter in the pursuit of her goals and the oceans goals. She will be missed but not forgotten.*

Ms. Sylvie Goyet: *The work of Biliana has been instrumental in raising the visibility of ocean changes. Having had the chance to take part in a number of ocean events, I have been impressed by Biliana's capabilities. She created the path to guide ambitions.*

Dr. Marea Hatzioolos: *I was moved by the tributes to Biliana, who was a force of nature and did so much to advance the field of ocean and coastal management. She poured heart and soul into everything she did.*

Mr. Taholo Kami: *I'd like to join everyone in a special acknowledgement of Biliana. If ever there was a force for ocean in the climate space, Biliana was that person who seemed to be everywhere in the discussions in the last 4-5 years, championing that ocean deserves a part in the climate space.*

Prof. Jacqueline McGlade: *The VOAD was such an important moment for recognizing Biliana's unique role in keeping our eyes firmly on the oceans and their critical role in our future and underpins the momentum we need to keep going through our various channels such as UNFCCC and others.*

Mr. Gonzalo Muñoz: *Biliana was a great convener so there is nothing better than convening an event to celebrate her life. It is absolutely important to acknowledge all the great work that she did for oceans and climate including her fundamental work under the Marrakech Partnership that we as High-Level Champions work with. And as a member of the COP25, the Blue COP team, we will remain thankful to Biliana forever.*

Mr. Tiago Pitta e Cunha: *Biliana ensured that the ocean had an important part at the Rio+10 Summit in South Africa in 2002: 30 out of the 140 paragraphs of the conclusion of the Summit included the ocean. She advanced the oceans in the climate change agenda by organizing Oceans Action Days at the COPs. At COP21 in Paris in 2015, she collaborated in the campaign to include the integration of the word "ocean" in the preamble in the Paris Agreement.*

Dr. Joanna Post: *People have their unique memories of Biliana and I am no exception. Although I only had the pleasure of knowing her in the last few years we managed still to have a few glasses of wine during various UNFCCC sessions and chatted about the importance of linking ocean and climate action. It was a pleasure to know her even if it was only for a very short time.*

H.E. Mr. Ricardo Serrão Santos: *Let me start by recalling the memory and legacy of our beloved Biliana Cicin-Sain, a champion of many causes. Her engagement in the agenda of the oceans, coasts, and small islands was vibrant. It must be remembered and pursued.*

Dr. Vladimir Ryabinin: *My dear friend and esteemed colleague, Professor Biliana Cicin-Sain, made a big contribution to this understanding of the role of ocean science in developing solutions and actions to climate issues. ... Biliana very strongly moved forward our common understanding of how to scientifically and sustainably manage the ocean.*

Mr. Philippe Vallette: *Biliana spoke many languages fluently. This was in accordance with her very open mind on every culture and way of thinking. She opened the doors of the Global Ocean Forum to me because of my main argument that nothing can be done without the commitment of the citizens.*