

A photograph of a mangrove forest with dense green foliage and prominent reddish-brown prop roots extending into the water. The scene is set against a clear blue sky.

BLUE CARBON SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

**Open Statement to the Delegates of COP16
by the Blue Climate Coalition**



Our oceans are critically important to climate change and the global carbon cycle. Certain coastal and marine ecosystems such as **mangrove forests, saltwater marshlands, seagrass meadows, and kelp forests** absorb and store atmospheric carbon dioxide and thereby naturally help mitigate the threat of climate change^{1,2}. These "blue carbon" ecosystems are extremely effective at storing carbon – mangroves and coastal wetlands store 50 times more carbon than tropical forests by area.

In the open ocean, recent promising research also indicates that marine vertebrates, such as whales, sharks and finfish, may also be very effective carbon sinks³.

Sadly, the global loss of coastal and marine ecosystems is occurring at an alarming rate – currently, on average, between 2-7% of our blue carbon sinks are lost annually. In one of the world's coastal ecosystem hot spots, the Coral Triangle, more than 40% of mangroves have been lost in the last 40 years and the trend is continuing.

The continued degradation of these ecosystems decreases the ocean's existing carbon stock and its capacity to mitigate climate change. It also threatens potential large-scale release of carbon to the atmosphere, through the direct loss of these habitats. Potential reduced oceanic carbon function and the release of carbon currently stored by blue carbon sinks is not included in climate projections.

Healthy coastal ecosystems are vital for the food security of many coastal and island communities in developing countries. In the Coral Triangle and Pacific alone, these ecosystems are critical to the livelihoods of over 100 million people. Loss of these systems not only threatens critical fish habitat and fishing grounds for artisanal fisheries, but it also reduces natural coastal defenses against storms and erosion.

Additionally, blue carbon ecosystems are critically important to marine biodiversity, the cultural identity of many coastal and island cultures, and provide numerous other valuable ecosystem services.

The large scale restoration of these ecosystems is possible – many community-based projects around the world are focused on restoring and conserving these important habitats. These positive efforts, which promote good governance and responsible stewardship, should be encouraged and supported.

RECOMMENDATIONS – We respectfully ask Parties to the Conference to consider the following actions:

- Include the conservation and restoration of **mangrove, saltwater marsh, seagrass, and kelp** ecosystems in your strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Establish a global Blue Carbon Fund for the protection and management of these important coastal ecosystems;
- Include blue carbon sinks in national REDD+ strategies and greenhouse gas accounting; and
- Support coordinated scientific research to better quantify blue carbon's role in climate mitigation, including the development of protocols and methodologies for monitoring, reporting, and verification of coastal and marine carbon sinks.





**Blue Carbon
Solutions are
Natural Climate
Solutions**

Signed by the following fifty-five marine and environmental stakeholders from nineteen countries (representing the Blue Climate Coalition):

- Rainbow Warriors Core Caribbean Foundation (Rainbow Warriors International)**

- **Aruba** -
Milton Ponson, President, Oranjestad, Aruba, Dutch Caribbean
- Australian Marine Conservation Society**

- **Australia** -
Darren Kindleysides, Director, Brisbane, Australia
- TierraMar Consulting Pty Limited**

Anissa Lawrence, Director, Sutherland, NSW, Australia
- WetlandCare Australia Ltd**

Anissa Lawrence, Director, Ballina, NSW, Australia
- APAMO: Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations**

- **Belize** -
Yvette Alonzo, Executive Director, Belize City, Belize
- Healthy Reefs for Healthy People**

Melanie McField, PhD, Director, Belize City, Belize
- Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development**

Mary Toy, Co-Chair, Placencia, Belize
- Living Oceans Society**

- **Canada** -
Jennifer Lash, Executive Director, Sointula, Canada
- MEDASSET 'The Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles'**

- **Greece** -
Konstantinos Grimanis, Director Athens, Greece
- Mesoamerican Reef Fund**

- **Guatemala** -
María José González, Executive Director Guatemala City, Guatemala
- Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM)**

- **Haiti** -
Jean W. Wiener, Director, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- Tethys Research Institute**

- **Italy** -
Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, PhD, Milano, Italy
- PEECO: Protection of the Environment and the EcoSystem**

- **Mauritania** -
Salimata Cheikh, President, Nouakchott, Mauritania
- MAUDESCO: Mauritius Council for Development Environmental Studies and Conservation**

- **Mauritius** -
Rajen Awotar, Executive Director, Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius
- Centro Ecológico Akumal**

- **México** -
Paul Sanchez-Navarro, Director, Quintana Roo, México
- Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, A.C.**

Lorenzo Rosenzweig, Executive Director, Mexico City, México
- NOS Noroeste Sustentable**

Alejandro Robles, Director, La Paz, México
- SuMar**

Maria Carvajal, Cofounder, Guaymas, México
- ECO: Environment and Conservation Organisations of New Zealand Inc**

- **New Zealand** -
Cath Wallace, Co-chair, Wellington, New Zealand

SUNGO: Samoa Umbrella for Non Governmental Organisations	- Samoa - High Chief Vaasiliifili Moelagi Jackson, SUNGO National President, Apia, Independent State of Samoa
Nature Seychelles	- Seychelles - Nirmal Jivan Shah, PhD, Chief Executive, Mahe, Republic of Seychelles
WAAME: West African Association for Marine Environment	- Sénégal - Abdulaye DIAME, Executive Director, Dakar, Republic of Sénégal
Tonga Community Development Trust	- Tonga - Mr. Sione Faka'osi, Executive Director, Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga
TNYC: Tonga National Youth Congress	Miss Siaila Jagroop, Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga
ECOTRUST	- Uganda - Pauline Nantongo Kalunda Executive Director Kampala, Uganda
Blue Ventures Conservation	- United Kingdom - Alasdair Harris, PhD, Research Director, London, United Kingdom (also Madagascar, Belize, & Peninsular Malaysia)
Beautify CNMI!	- United States of America - Cinta M. Kaipat, Founder, Saipan, CNMI, USA
Blue Climate Solutions	Steven J. Lutz, Executive Director, Founder, Blue Climate Coalition & Blue Carbon Blog, Miami, FL, USA
Blue Frontier Campaign	David Helvarg, President, Washington DC, USA
Blue Legacy International	Alexandra Cousteau, Founder and President, Washington, DC, USA
Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island	Arthur H. Kopelman, Ph. D., President, Long Island, NY, USA
EarthEcho International	Philippe Cousteau, Jr., Co-founder and CEO, Washington, DC, USA
Global Coral Reef Alliance	Thomas J. Goreau, PhD, President, Cambridge, MA, USA
Guanaja Mangrove Restoration	Scott Duncan, Director, South Portland, ME, USA (also Isla de Guanaja, Honduras)
Interfaith Council for the Protection of Animals and Nature (ICPAN)	Lewis Regenstein, President, Atlanta, GA, USA
Mangrove Action Project	Alfredo Quarto, Executive Director, Port Angeles, WA, USA (also Thailand & Indonesia)
NAUI Worldwide	Jed Livingstone, Vice President, Tampa, FL, USA
Ocean Conservation Research	Michael Stocker, Executive Director, Forest Knolls, CA, USA
Ocean Revolution	Wallace J. Nichols, PhD, Founder & Co-Director, Davenport, CA, USA
Restore America's Estuaries	Jeff Benoit, President, Arlington, VA, USA
SandyHook SeaLife Foundation	Mary M. Hamilton, Executive Director, Highlands, NJ, USA





Save Our Seas

Capt. Paul Clark, President, Hanalei, HI, USA

Save the Manatee Club

Patrick M. Rose, Executive Director, Maitland, FL, USA

Sea Turtle Conservancy

David Godfrey, Executive Director, Sea Turtle Conservancy, Gainesville, FL, USA

Sea Turtle Restoration Project

Todd Steiner, Director & Founder, Olema, CA, USA

Seagrass Recovery

Jeff Beggins, President & CEO, Indian Rocks Beach, FL, USA

SEE Turtles

Brad Nahill, Director & Co-Founder, Beaverton, OR, USA

Sierra Club

Bruce Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director, San Francisco, CA, USA

South Carolina Coastal Conservation League

Dana Beach, Executive Director, Charleston, SC, USA

The Ocean Foundation

Mark J. Spalding, PhD, President, Washington, DC, USA

The Ocean Project

Bill Mott, Director, Providence, RI, USA

The School of International Relations and Pacific Studies Delegate to COP16

Jarrod Russell, San Diego, CA, USA

The Snorkel Bob Foundation

Robert Wintner, Executive Director, Kihei, HI, USA

Urban Paradise Guild

Sam Van Leer, Executive Director, Miami, FL, USA

WILDCOAST/COSTASALVAJE

Serge Dedina, PhD, Executive Director Imperial Beach, CA, USA
(also Ensenada, México)

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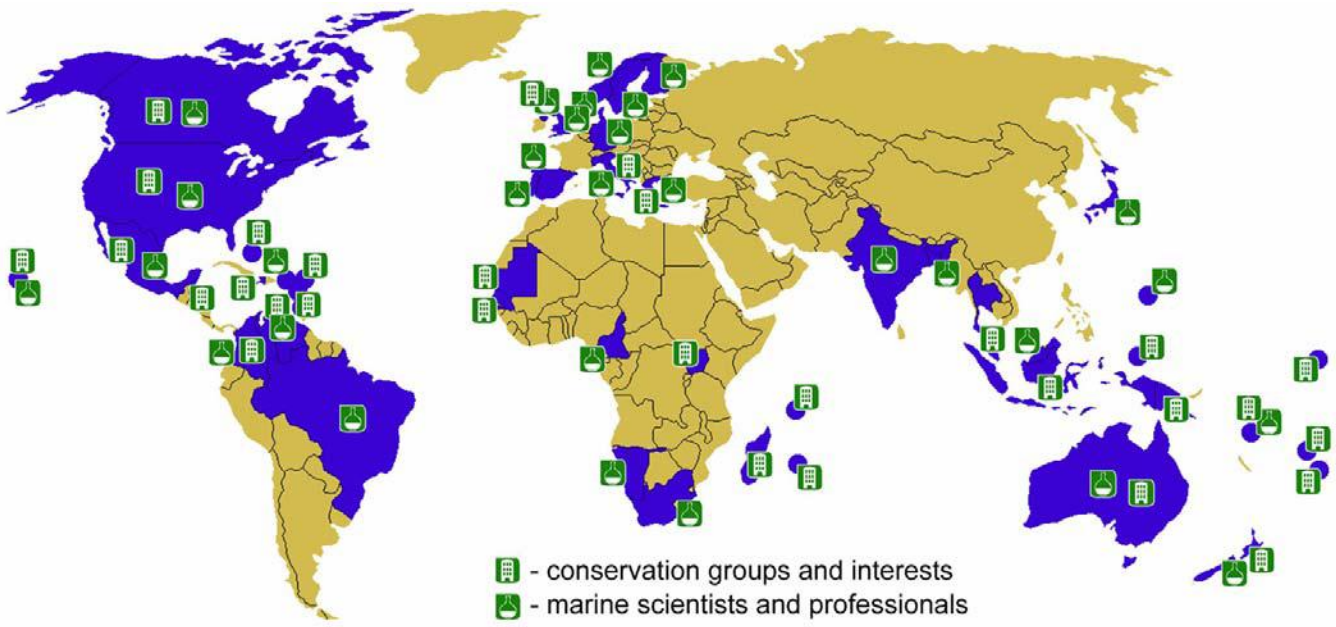
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The **Blue Climate Coalition** was formed in November 2009 to help advance coastal and marine conservation as part of the solution to climate change. Over 100 conservation groups and environmental stakeholders, and over 150 scientists together from 43 countries, have joined the Coalition's call to support blue carbon solutions for climate change.



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