

A photograph of a mangrove forest. The top half shows the green foliage of the trees against a clear blue sky. The bottom half shows the intricate, reddish-brown prop roots of the mangrove trees extending into shallow, clear water. The water reflects the roots and the surrounding greenery.

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





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

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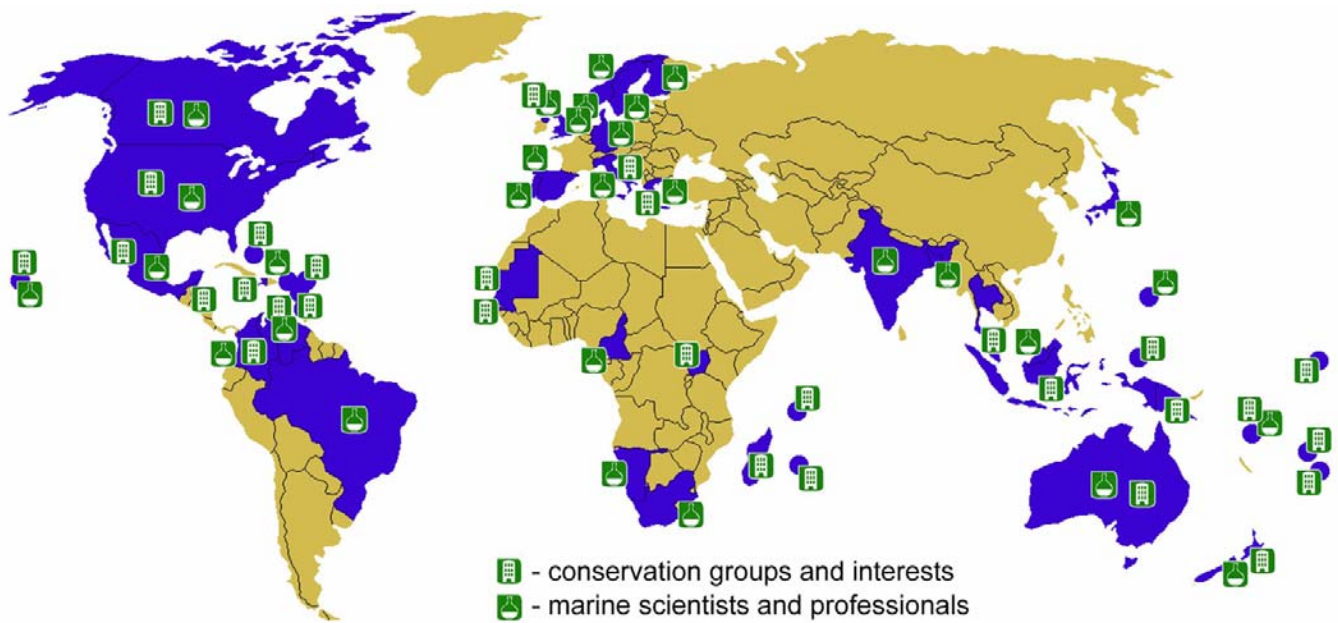
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The **Blue Climate Coalition** was formed in November 2009 to help advance coastal and marine conservation as part of the solution to climate change. Over 100 conservation groups and environmental stakeholders, and over 150 scientists together from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



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