

"Actioning Ocean Conservation and Sustainable Blue Economies through Women's Leadership"

"When women participate in negotiations, peace lasts longer. When girls can go to school, entire generations lift out of poverty. When women enjoy equal job opportunities, economies grow stronger. And with parity in political leadership, decisions are fairer, policies are sharper, and societies are more just. When women and girls rise, everyone thrives."

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres
International Women's Day event
UN Headquarters, New York. 7 March 2025

PREAMBLE

WE, the Heads of Delegation and representatives of governments, UN agencies and other multilateral institutions, NGOs, IGOs, philanthropic organizations, and other decision-making bodies, recognize that coastal women are key stewards of marine biodiversity and ecosystems, instrumental in promoting climate resilience and sustainable blue economies.

WE acknowledge the significant progress made over the past five decades through international legal and policy frameworks, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Inter-American Convention of Belém do Pará, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP), alongside key recommendations and UN resolutions that reinforce the rights of rural and Indigenous women in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development such as the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries, among others.

WE acknowledge that the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide us with a set of agreed upon targets and guidelines to advance inclusive marine conservation and the development of sustainable blue economies.

WE recognize that achieving equality for women and girls is fundamental to meeting international commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 1, 5 and 14), Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Target 23), and climate resilience strategies such as the Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement .

WE collectively recognize that women hold knowledge of coastal marine biodiversity and ecosystems that is fundamental to the cultural identity, economic prosperity, food security, health, and sustainable development of coastal communities globally.

WE remain deeply concerned that women bear a disproportionate share of the burden caused by the three interrelated global crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution. Women are at the frontlines of impacts that: affect their income generation ability; increase their domestic and productive workloads; decrease mobility opportunities; and limit access to capital, land, and markets; this is compounded by socio-cultural barriers including gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

THEREFORE:

WE welcome the strong [CALL TO ACTION](#) from Women Ocean Guardians

WE collectively agree to accelerate enabling conditions for coastal women's leadership in marine conservation, fisheries management, and blue economy policies through the following set of commitments to:

- a. Align national biodiversity and ocean sustainable plans with targets under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Paris Agreement, and Sustainable Development Goals, reinforcing inclusive governance as a pillar of effective conservation and management.
- b. Elevate coastal women to have formal roles in decision-making about conservation and sustainable use initiatives at local, national, regional, and global levels, advocating for full, equal, and meaningful participation in government environmental agencies, marine protected areas governance bodies, and other decision-making platforms.
- c. Promote capacity-building programs that equip coastal women with leadership, management, and financial mobilization skills, including by facilitating South-South cooperation and cross-regional exchanges that foster knowledge-sharing and enable scaling of equitable solutions for marine conservation, sustainable use and climate resilience.
- d. Support the establishment of financing mechanisms that resource women-led conservation initiatives, climate-resilient livelihoods, and community-based marine protection.
- e. Strengthen monitoring frameworks by ensuring transparency and accountability, and disaggregated data collection, to track and report progress on women's inclusion in marine conservation and management, ensuring that national and regional biodiversity strategies incorporate clear indicators on equity for all.

Signed,

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Signature

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Date