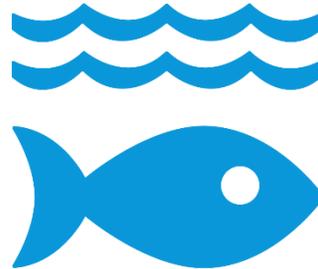




14 LIFE BELOW WATER



MODERATORS

Kristin Rechberger and Enric Sala

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The 17 Rooms initiative is convened by the Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation to stimulate near-term cooperative actions to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document summarizes insights and actions that emerged from the working group discussions in Room 14 during the 17 Rooms 2020 flagship process. The text was independently prepared by the Room's Moderators and participants, in response to the common question asked of all Rooms in 2020: "In light of recent crises linked to COVID-19, systemic racism, and other urgent challenges, what are 1 to 3 actionable priorities over the coming 12-18 months that address near term needs while also making a decisive contribution to protecting or advancing your Goal's 2030 results? What actions can members of your Room take to advance these priorities?" Corresponding documents prepared by all the other Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

Premise for Room 14

Overexploitation and global warming are diminishing the ability of the ocean to provide for us. Strategic and effective ocean protection is a quick and cost-effective way to replenish marine life and the critical services it provides, enhancing food security, climate change mitigation, and livelihoods.

Achievable, ambitious game-changers by the end of 2021

- Achieve SDG 14's target of 10 percent of the ocean protected by 2020.¹ Effective management is also necessary.
- Secure "30 percent of the ocean in well-managed, highly protected areas (MPAs)² by 2030" as a target of the post-2020 framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Encourage countries to commit to sustainably manage 100 percent of the ocean area under national jurisdiction, guided by sustainable ocean plans by 2025, beginning with the 14 countries of the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. This requires investment in training and tools in marine ecosystem management.
- End harmful subsidies to fishing.³
- Encourage all coastal countries to join the Port States Measures Agreement to help end illegal, unmanaged, and unregulated fishing worldwide.

Integrating SDG 14 with other priority SDGs through 2021

While all the SDGs tie closely to the ocean, COVID-19 has highlighted the need to build stronger resilience for our natural and socioeconomic systems and tighten agendas between SDG 14 and the following for mutual benefit:

SDG 13 (Climate Action):

The ocean is a recipient of climate change impacts such as ocean warming and acidification that kills coral reefs, but it is also a solution. Ocean sediments are the largest carbon sink on earth, but human activities such as bottom trawling and dredging (and eventually deep-sea mining) disturb ocean carbon stocks and release significant amounts of CO₂ that would otherwise be locked in the seafloor. With extreme weather events intensifying, climate adaptation has become as important as mitigation. Funding and scaling ocean renewable energies, including off-shore wind, and decarbonizing maritime industries such as shipping is essential.

- We will embed ocean decarbonization and nature-based solutions into climate agendas including the Climate COP 26 (Glasgow) end 2021.

SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being):

By some estimates, the world already [produces](#) enough food for 10 billion people, but we [waste a third of it](#) from the sea (or the farm) to the table. Nearly a third of the [wild fish catch](#) is destined for animal feed, thus redirecting food and essential nutrients from low-food-secure countries to rich, high-food-secure countries. In addition, most fish stocks are [overfished](#) or have already collapsed, because of fisheries mismanagement. A combination of 100 ocean management with well-placed MPAs, international agreements such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and cutting-edge technology can foster replenishment, tracking, and compliance. Sustainable ocean economies with local beneficiaries also helps lift and keep people out of poverty. In addition to nourishing us physically, a healthy ocean restores us psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

- We will continue to tie the ocean to the human condition including the UN Food Systems Summit end 2021.

SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):

Large-scale industrial fisheries have the largest impact in the ocean, but they employ [24 times less people](#) than small-scale fisheries. Redirecting harmful subsidies to restore sustainable small-scale coastal fisheries and aquaculture would improve livelihoods and local economies on coastal areas worldwide, mostly in developing countries.

¹Strategically placed, well-managed, highly protected marine areas have proven to replenish marine life and related economies that depend on them including tourism and fisheries.

²"Marine protected areas" as per IUCN [definition](#), and level of protection as defined by the [MPA Guide](#).

³There is overcapacity in the global fishing fleet and there is excessive fishing effort to the point that [82% of fish stocks](#) are experiencing overfishing. This is propped up by harmful government subsidies that enable a small number of countries to fish all over the world, threatening and often depleting the food base of developing countries where they fish. WTO should eliminate harmful subsidies.

- We will work to decrease risk, opening investment in a sustainable, just ocean economy with a hopeful watch on the WTO ending harmful subsidies.

SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) & SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation):

In addition to climate pollution, solving for land-based pollution (plastics, nutrient, sewage, and industry run-off) is required for a healthy ocean.

SDG 15 (Life on Land):

'Ridge to reef' and management of coastal and upstream activities is necessary for life on land and below water, including mangroves and other critical coastal ecosystems.

- We will continue to connect land systems to sea systems for smarter management including with geospatial analytics.