This report has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Overseas Countries and Territories Association which is co-funded by the European Union. The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the author alone and should in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission or the Overseas Countries and Territorie.
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<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPMR</td>
<td>Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG CLIMA</td>
<td>Directorate General for Climate Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG DEVCO</td>
<td>Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the European Commission</td>
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<td>DG ENV</td>
<td>Directorate General for Environment of the European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG GROW</td>
<td>Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs</td>
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<td>DG MARE</td>
<td>Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries</td>
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<td>DG RTD</td>
<td>Directorate General for Research and Innovation</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EEZ</td>
<td>Exclusive economic zone</td>
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<td>EIB</td>
<td>European Investment Bank</td>
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<td>EMFF</td>
<td>European Maritime and Fisheries Fund</td>
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<td>EP</td>
<td>European Parliament</td>
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<td>ERA</td>
<td>European Research Area</td>
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<td>ERDF</td>
<td>European Regional Development Fund</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>MEP</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
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<td>MFF</td>
<td>Multiannual financial framework</td>
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<td>MMA</td>
<td>Marine managed area</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>MPA</td>
<td>Marine protected area</td>
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<td>MS</td>
<td>Member States</td>
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<td>OCT</td>
<td>Overseas Countries and Territories</td>
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<td>OCTA</td>
<td>Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECM</td>
<td>Other effective area-based conservation measures</td>
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<td>OT</td>
<td>Overseas territory</td>
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<td>PECC</td>
<td>Pacific Economic Cooperation Council</td>
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<td>SAERI</td>
<td>South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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Introduction by the President of the Executive Committee of OCTA, Olivier Gaston

Mr Gaston warmly welcomed the participants. He kicked off the event by reminding that oceans are what unites all the OCTs.

Recalling a famous admonition by Jacque Chirac "our house is burning and we are looking elsewhere", Mr Gaston highlighted that this event is an opportunity for the OCTs' representatives to not only face the issue head on but to also contribute to finding solutions. Given the significant combined size of the OCTs EEZs, the OCTs have a pivotal role to play in addressing challenges confronting the oceans.
Welcome by OCTA Presidency, Prime Minister of Curaçao, Eugene Rhuggenaath

The Prime Minister of Curaçao reaffirmed the importance of the oceans as a topic binding all the OCTs. Oceans are a source of life protecting humanity by absorbing heat as well as CO2. However, the Prime Minister noted, this protection has come at a cost and the current state of the oceans is a matter of great concern. He also underlined that the conference provides an excellent opportunity to address the challenges facing oceans and discuss their environmental, economic and social dimensions.

He stressed that a strategic vision for sustainable management of marine resources within the OCTs EEZs is necessary to counter the current issues. At the same time, there is also a need to ensure that the management is done by the OCTs themselves in a sustainable manner, guaranteeing that the local populations benefit from the economic activities linked to ocean.

The Prime Minister reminded that the final act of the first day of the conference would result in the OCTs coming together and signing a declaration on oceans. This declaration could be a start of the strategy to conserve oceans while ensuring that the OCTs economic development is not jeopardised.

Concluding his welcome remarks, Mr Rhuggenaath stressed that it is not too late to reverse the damage by acting together, starting today. In this context, it is vital to cooperate with international partners, including the European Commission. The OCTs need help of international community not only for financial assistance - they also require empowerment and collaboration. There is a clear need for global solutions transcending national borders.

(The speech of the Prime Minister, Eugene Rhuggenaath can be found in annex 1)
The MEP thanked all the participants and was pleased to open the OCTA conference in his capacity as the President of the European Parliament’s Committee on Regional Development. He argued that the ocean challenges are one of the principal issues to be addressed by Europe and took the opportunity to commend the OCTs representatives on their timely Declaration.

Mr Omarjee acknowledged that people are increasingly aware of the dangers posed by the dominant productivist economic model and the current geopolitical approach as well as of the fact that our democracies are lagging behind in addressing some pressing issues. The young generations, however, are demanding that the planet is taken care of.

The MEP also noted that the sea and deep oceans are a frontier that the mankind is yet to conquer as so much remains unknown about this part of the planet. It is important to work on accessing this untapped wealth of the oceans. In this context, he cautioned that multinationals driven by neoliberal ideology have a lot of interest in exploiting this potential. For this reason, a regulatory framework has to be put in place to prevent the crimes committed during the exploitation of terrestrial resources from repeating themselves in the seas and to ensure that the benefits derived from oceans go to the people.

The EU together with its OCTs are a marine giant and the biggest maritime power in the world. Mr Omarjee warned that this maritime power of Europe must not be turned into a new instrument of domination and colonisation. Instead, investments need to be made into research to uncover what other added value oceans have to offer.

The preservation of the biosphere and the survival of humanity is dependent on oceans. The OCTs and all the islands around the globe have a pivotal role to play on this issue. The impact of climate change on islands has to be anticipated in advance and their involvement in finding solutions is essential.
Mr Lamy spoke about four main dimensions of oceans, namely environment, economy, geopolitics, and science. Currently the planet is going through significant environmental pressures and consequences of unsustainable economic model. Given that so much of the ocean remains terra incognita science has a prominent role to play. For this reason, investment in science is required to bridge the knowledge gap about oceans.

He stressed that all the environmental threats are increasing, leading to a slow death of oceans and killing the main lungs of the planet.

Regarding economic dimension, oceans constitute the seventh largest economy in the world. Unfortunately, they have been overexploited and polluted. The only viable solution to these issues is to transform the Blue Economy into circular economy. In terms of geopolitics, he cautioned that ocean would always influence actions of the big international players and it would remain a tool for power.

Investing in knowledge and Science is important and the European Commission has mandated Mr Lamy to chair the Mission Board for Oceans. One of the objectives is to identify an area of investment for the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe. The other objective is to develop the enabling policies.

Mr Lamy expressed his hope that the scientific issues would find the place they deserve in the OCTs Declaration as science is certainly a part of the solution to the systemic challenges. He also asked the representatives of the OCTs to provide the main priorities they are focusing on to be communicated to the Mission Board for Oceans. At the end of his intervention, Mr Lamy urged that the time of speeches has passed and the time has come to act.
Ms Millot began her intervention by recalling that oceans are what connects the OCTs and continental Europe. She thanked OCTA for giving visibility for this important topic and providing an opportunity to reflect on and present the OCTs priorities as well as joint commitments concerning the preservation of oceans.

She recalled that the EU has been supporting the OCTs in their efforts to address challenges linked to oceans through concrete actions like preservation of biodiversity in the Caribbean Regional Programme. These actions that are dedicated to the OCTs fit in a more global approach taken by the EU that in this past year has adopted an ambitious programme regarding oceans.

The increasing attention given to oceans also draws more attention to the OCTs. Ms Millot further elaborated on the EU’s strong commitment to marine related issues by invoking two recent developments. Firstly, the Green Deal proposed by the incoming Commission would be a top priority for the next five years and there is no doubt that this Green Deal would have prominent shades of blue. Secondly, the new Commission has a portfolio dedicated to both environment and oceans sending a strong political message.

Another relevant development discussed by Ms Millot is the negotiations for the new Overseas Association Decision between the OCTs and the EU for the next MFF period. The EC’s proposal foresees development of cooperation on the international ocean governance and proposes to reinforce regional cooperation between the OCTs and their regional neighbours.

Ms Millot advised all the OCTs to capitalise on the programmes on ocean governance and research like BEST as well as Horizon 2020. In her closing remarks, Ms Millot underscored that an increasing importance of oceans on the global agenda presents an excellent opportunity for the OCTs to contribute to their better understanding, explore suitable solutions, and showcase their potential. She encouraged the OCTs to maintain the momentum surrounding their Declaration while assuring that the EU is there to support and cooperate with them.

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**Video Intervention, MEP Catherine Chabaud**

Ms Chabaud joined the conference via video intervention to convey three key messages. Firstly, she highlighted that in order for the OCTs to contribute to the solutions, they need to be provided with the means for research, conservation, development of sustainable economy, and appropriate tools for governance. Secondly, investing in energy and food independence of these territories should be a priority. Finally, she noted that given the exposure of the OCTs to adverse effects of climate change, strategies for climate resilience should also be developed.

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**Intervention of the European Commission, DG DEVCO, Sylvie Millot**

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The Ambassador noted that the OCTs must have a say in negotiations on the ocean governance. The OCTs also have a responsibility to contribute to protection of biodiversity and marine life as it is both global and regional responsibility.

Mr Segura presented a snapshot of the pertinent developments on the international stage. He began by drawing attention to Our Ocean meeting taking place in Oslo that aims at bringing together leaders from governments, businesses, civil society and research institutions to share their experience, identify solutions and commit to action for a clean, healthy, and productive ocean. Another relevant meeting is the fourth Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction that should result in a signature a treaty aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. Two key words in the title of the convention - conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity - are of utmost importance. A balance must be struck between the two concepts, as the oceans should not merely become an aquarium. Another important international event is 2020 UN Oceans conference that will take stock of what has been achieved and what has been lagging behind in the implementation of the SDG 14.

Speaking about the importance of the regional stakeholders, the Ambassador underlined that the regional perspective on ocean governance should be taken into account. Global and regional perspectives need to complement one another.

After a question from the audience about how can the OCTs engage in the BBNJ negotiations, the Ambassador suggested that the best approach would be to contact their national representatives in New York and communicate their interest to take part.
Mr Boman gave a presentation about Sint Eustatius and the challenges confronting the territory as well as solutions embraced by the islanders. The main issues regarding conservation of biodiversity are erosion and sedimentation caused by water, eutrophication partly resulting from farm animals as well as pollution, plastic, biocides, and pesticides.

There is a number of projects implemented on the island involving relevant stakeholders. For instance, to tackle erosion and sedimentation, a new road plan was developed combining water management with road planning. The goal of the project was to improve road and water management as well as to use the water that falls on the island for agriculture.

However, there are problems that remain unresolved. For instance, sewage treatment is major issue that requires costly solutions but the cost of doing nothing would be even higher. In addition, the inadequate and outdated legislative framework does not provide sufficient nature protection.

During the exchange with participants, Mr Boman spoke about the shark sanctuary Yarari and the initial pushback from the fishermen who later came to see the benefits of the project. Therefore, it is critical to involve all the affected stakeholders, explaining them potential short-term adverse effects and devising mitigation measures.

Another question from the audience about the development of an application connecting fishermen with potential buyers as well as educating them on sustainable fisheries. The development of the application was done in close cooperation with the relevant actors. It would also allow fishermen to register their catch.
Sustainably managing St Helena’s marine environment, Rhys Hobbs, Marine Conservation Officer, Government of Saint Helena

Mr Hobbs presented the work done on Saint Helena to manage the marine environment, specifically in relation to the Blue Belt programme. The island has huge biodiversity and endemism, while the need for conservation of biodiversity is often driven by cultural and economic factors.

Blue Belt Vision 2020 is a key programme delivering assistance for the British OTs to manage their marine environments. One of the focal areas of the programme is linked to addressing the gaps in the legislation, that were hampering the ability to effectively manage and conserve oceans. A good example in this regard would be holistic implementation of fisheries legislation, to better regulate inshore activities and any infractions, as well as legislation managing tourism activities.

Another key area of the programme is science. A number of activities are conducted on stock assessments, like tuna tagging programme, to better understand the behaviour of tuna in and around the island as well as age groups of fish. It is essential to build up the knowledge base to make decisions on sustainable management of marine environment. The Blue Belt programme has also provided opportunities to train locals in terms of solution realisation.

Responding to a question about funding, Mr Hobbs confirmed that some of the core funding is limited and securing funding continuity is critical for their work.
Process and Challenges to create a MPA, Luc Bas, IUCN

Mr Bas started his presentation by giving a few figures from the World Database of Protected Areas. He presented IUCN, an international intergovernmental organisation that also has over 1200 civil NGOs, 90 States and 200 government agencies as members. For any decision, a majority of votes has to be obtained from both categories of members.

He underlined that working with the OCTs is essential as they cover large MPAs. What happens in the OCTs territories with regard to marine biodiversity, the designation as well as proper management are crucial to achieving MPA targets on a global level. In addition, the OCTs are central to preservation of the EU biodiversity as they are home to 70 percent of it.

Designation of MPAs is an important issue both in the EU and the OCTs. He also pointed out that 70 percent of all MPAs territory is covered by 20 protected areas. When the protected areas are so vast, how can they be effectively managed? The high seas management remains a challenge. Considering the OCTs geography and link to the four Member States, they are in a good position to advocate for stronger protection.

Mr Bas also spoke about the challenges facing MPAs. The current global target of 10 percent is not sufficient, it has to be raised to 30-40 percent by 2030 as stated in a recent resolution. However, beyond fixed targets, 100 percent of all marine environments should be sustainably used and managed.

Therefore, MPAs management should be integrated in the greater seascape and connected to other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).

He also suggested that more transparency on the reporting on MPAs is desirable. The terminology needs to be clarified on the levels of protection and state of implementation. In addition, the IUCN would like to ensure accountability against the proposed targets.

Regarding the levels of protection, Mr Bas mentioned that there is an MPA guidance with standards. A IUCN Green List has also been created, establishing standards for the most effective management of MPA.

There will be a major MPA Congress in Vancouver in 2021.
Ms Goarant elaborated on the New Caledonia's approach to ocean management, protection of biodiversity and maritime zone monitoring. The three provinces in New Caledonia have the competence in the field of environmental management. New Caledonia is also competent in the EEZ management and has created the “Parc naturel de la Mer de Corail”. The state is competent for EEZ monitoring.

New Caledonia has embraced a multileveled approach in the MPA management involving local players and international collaboration. The local stakeholders are at the centre of the management of the MPA, including the customary sector, the private sector, the public sector and NGOs. On a bilateral level, cooperation is taking place in two areas, namely ocean management and conservation. For instance, the government of New Caledonia has signed an agreement with Australia on scientific cooperation that also aims to improve cooperation with the “owners” of the different MPA. At multilateral level, New Caledonia participates in different networks and initiatives such as Pacific Oceanscape and Big Ocean.

The representative of New Caledonia emphasised that once an MPA is created, the focus should be directed to monitoring, follow up and execution. Spatial planning, law, cooperation and innovation are key tools.

Regarding the limitations in the establishment and management of MPAs, Ms Goarant noted that legal tools are not always efficient in establishment of cross-border MPAs due to divergent legislation. National interest can also undermine the cross-border cooperation and management of MPAs.

Based on the experience of New Caledonia, it is better to start working on a small scale, focusing on actions that have proven to be effective. Consultation process when establishing MPAs is essential for efficiency and sustainability while political backing also plays an important role. She highlighted that new adaptable mapping tools and communicating success stories are needed to ensure the success of an MPA. New Caledonia is convinced that large challenges can only be addressed through cooperation and that the main goal of MPAs should be to preserve biodiversity and heritage as opposed to solely focusing on the size of the area.
Mr Van der Velde suggested a change in terminology on protected areas. Instead of MPA the concept of marine managed areas (MMAs) was introduced. He noted that Saba has several marine areas with different degree of protection. The process of designation was conducted in a close consultation with the fishermen to preserve certain traditions. As a result, challenges emanating from establishment of the MMA were minimal.

He also gave an overview of the history of Saba bank management. Prior to introduction of the 10-10-10 system, fishing licences were handled by the previous Netherland Antilles. In the 90s, the Saba bank was overfished, while the anchoring damage from visiting oil tankers was substantial. Eventually, an establishment of a special management unit for Saba bank was negotiated. Mr Van der Velde noted that small players on the global stage should find common goals with the big player and see what they can do for them. In case of Saba, the Saba bank management unit is funded by the Dutch government yet, it is hosted by the island and integrated into a local organisation creating a win-win situation.

In response to a question about addressing the threat of invasive species, Mr Van der Velde shared a “if you cannot beat them, eat them” approach whereby Saba bank rangers and volunteers hunt the invasive species.
Mr Dreary mentioned that the UK OTs are highly self-governing and they are responsible for their own maritime domain. The Blue Belt programme supports the UK government manifesto commitment to protect ocean. It provided 20 million pounds in the period from 2016 to 2020. Delivered in partnership through the Marine Management Organisation and CEFAS, the programme aims to bring demonstrable increase in marine protection.

MPA designation is entirely driven by the UK OTs while the government provides necessary assistance. The programme also recognises that there is no one size fits all solution, there is an array of MPA designations from strict marine reserves to sustainable use of well-managed areas.

The programme also has surveillance and compliance component. A centralised intelligence and surveillance hub has been established to provide capacity to the UK OTs. It also provides low cost technology that can be used in these challenging environments, assisting in delivery of training packages to the local law enforcement officers. This work is mostly focused on incursion from the high seas by foreign flagged vessels that are not licensed into the EEZs. By the end of the programme there should be four million km2 of ocean legally designated and underpinned by a robust and fully implemented marine management plan, high quality surveillance and intelligence management capacity.
Mr Dorémus explained that the French Southern and Antarctic Lands are located in a very isolated marine environment with low human activity and high rates of preservation. These are also vulnerable territories sensitive to the impacts of climate change, illegal fishing, invading exotic species and waste management. Consequently, there is an impetus for protection of the heritage with the long-term protective tools and management systems adapted to the specificities of territories.
Ms Chambon joined her colleague to present the case of the National Nature Reserve established on Austral Islands that was extended to the sea territories in 2016. The process of designation was based on eco-regionalisation in cooperation with the scientific community. The second management plan of this area for 2018-2027 was developed in partnership with scientists to ensure the robustness of foreseen actions, 19 of which aim to improve knowledge on ecosystems, especially in the deep benthic environment. In addition, the National Nature Reserve has two types of zones: general protection zone and reinforced protection zone. The fishing is allowed in the former while it is completely prohibited in the latter.

In 2018, the reserve has been classified on the IUCN Green List and in 2019, it has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

She concluded her presentation with two main takeaways. Firstly, Ms Chambon noted that creation and development of programmes to improve knowledge about the environments and marine ecosystems should be supported. Secondly, implementation of protection and management tools adapted to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans should also be facilitated.
SESSION 3 - Creating value chains (Fisheries, Bio-economy, Basin approach) and Sustainably managing species

Katrine Kaergaard, Chief Advisor, Ministry of Fisheries, Greenland

Ms Kaergaard kicked off her presentation by introducing the red gold of Greenland. Shrimps bear this moniker thanks to their significance to Greenland’s economy. They provide direct employment to almost 10 percent of the fishing fleet. Overall, fisheries are the most important sector in Greenland, amounting to 93% of total exports in 2018. Ocean surrounding Greenland is the property of its people. Therefore, Greenlandic government wants to ensure that this vast resource benefits the entire society. This is done by a number of different measures: limitation of foreign ownership in the fishery industry whereby the majority of owners have permanent residents in Greenland; landing obligations ensuring direct and indirect land based employment; ban on discards providing better data for scientists and managers and taxes based on quantity and price.

She also described the measures employed for the sustainable use of the marine resources. The Greenland Institute of National Resources conducts surveys, participates in international scientific working groups, and advises the government on the most economically important species. Beside scientific surveys, experimental fisheries are also carried out The Ministry of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture sets the legal framework regulating fisheries. Greenland also has a number of management plans outlining conditions and management measure for specific fisheries. Ms Kaergaard also highlighted that it is important to have strong control and surveillance to ensure effective management and compliance through varied inspection mechanisms.

In terms of added value of cooperation with other actors, she noted that by participating in regional and international projects, Greenland gets benefits to its own fishing sector simultaneously contributing to advancement of innovation.

Ms Kaergaard wrapped up her intervention by highlighting that to increase the value and sustainability of the fishing sector it is important to establish a framework that can facilitate adaptation (to update the legal framework, introduce technologies, increase communication and transparency, increase collaboration, etc.).
Tara Pelembe, Deputy Director, SAERI

Ms Pelembe presented the work of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI) in Falkland Islands. SAERI was established by local citizens to conduct research in the South Atlantic. She informed the audience that the creation of the environmental institute was influenced by economic drivers. SAERI advances environmental understanding in the territories and countries in which it operates through partnerships, Research Institutes to deliver research excellence and innovative science leadership.

Partnerships and collaborations are an indispensable part of the institute’s work. It has more than 100 collaborators and partners. It focuses on key focal environmental areas, including marine science and evidence-based data should be at the core of its activities.

She also stressed that research hubs do not need to start big as long as they have vision and use the resources at their disposal. While trying to develop a framework for sustainable fisheries, the Institute defined six core elements of sustainable fisheries namely productivity, local ownership, revenue, law enforcement, fishery protection, and conservation measures. In this context, reliable data is indispensable for decision making. For this reason, SAERI is mapping what is occurring in the marine space.

At the end of the presentation, she conveyed the key messages that islands can be global hubs for research and innovation, they can develop global solutions for sustainable use of fisheries, and they can be both inward and outward looking. People from the islands have the ownership to lead on all of these initiatives.

A follow up comment from the audience highlighted that one of the considerable problems facing Falklands is a large number of foreign fishing boats in the South Atlantic and the islanders cannot control what happens outside the area managed by them.
Felix Leinemann, DG MARE

Mr Leinemann suggested that there is a number of possibilities in the Blue Economy that go beyond fisheries. The sustainability and health of the oceans are a priority because only a healthy ocean can bring wealth and the mistakes made in the exploitation of the land resources should not be repeated with oceans.

Speaking about the opportunities of the Blue Economy, he informed the participants about the second annual Blue Economy Report published this year that not only examined many established sectors but also an increasing number of emerging sectors like blue biotechnology, marine renewable energy, desalination, coastal protection, circular economy and the blue biotechnology. The OCTs may also be able to benefit from many of these fledging sectors.

The EU Common Fisheries Policy is moving towards full sustainability and this approach has delivered promising results. In the North and Baltic seas as the fishing pressure has moved to the maximum sustainable yield, the profits of the industry have gone up like never before. Although, it does not necessarily happen in every region, the main takeaway is that if oceans are treated sustainably, it will give abundant rewards.

He noted that there are three perspective on how to look at the Blue Economy. One perspective is on enablers, looking at marine data, observation, and skills development. Several projects were funded to advance blue careers, bringing universities and industry together to work on common curricula. Second perspective is on sectors. There might be specific approaches that are fit for different sectors. For instance, fish industry waste could be utilised in innovative aquaculture and blue bio economy. Third perspective takes into account regional specificity. After examination of different sea basins, it was discovered that all of them have distinct characteristics. Therefore, there are different strategies reflecting these specificities.

In his final remarks, Mr Leinemann provided information about EU funding to support the Blue Economy such as the Blue Economy calls of the EMFF. When the calls are under Direct management of the European Commission, the OCTs are eligible. A “Blue Economy Window” call will be published to stimulate private investment.

José Benedicto, GROW RUP project

Mr Benedicto introduced the Grow RUP project that involves five outermost EU regions. The project aims to provide solutions to unemployment from the perspective of sustainable blue and green development in the outermost EU regions. There are four action programmes to promote sustainable employment and entrepreneurship, namely specialized vocational guidance programme, programme of training and workplace stages, job opportunities programme, and entrepreneurship support programme.

The project is also intended to improve ERDF policy instruments and provide a tool addressing employment issues. He suggested that the two phase project methodology could be replicated by the OCTs. The first phase consists of joint interregional analysis, site visits in each region to identify best practices, meetings with local stakeholders to verify the best practices and develop the basis for the Action Plans, and, finally, drafting Action Plans. The second phase revolves around implementation and monitoring of the Action Plans.

He concluded his presentation by highlighting that Action Plans were tailored for each outermost region and providing an overview of the actions.
**Andrew Estep, Waitt Institute**

Mr Estep spoke about the work of the Blue Prosperity Coalition, a coalition of NGOs, academic institutions, and foundations working together to assist committed governments in developing and implementing sustainable marine spatial plans to protect the environment and improve the economy at the same time.

The main tool used to address ocean protection is marine spatial planning with a proper engagement from the relevant stakeholders, including decision makers and scientists. He emphasised that getting everyone in the room through governance processes to formalise marine spatial plan legislation as quickly as possible to be able to implement them on site with partners is imperative.

The lessons learned show that economy and environment need not be mutually exclusive from one another. The best way to engage on this is to work towards achieving 30 percent MPAs globally through marine spatial planning. The path forward is to establish MOU with partner governments at the highest level possible and other partners that want to join.

The Blue Economy is achieved through developing full-scale economic development plans with scientifically sound conservation goals and incentives, strengthening the capacity of governments and civil society to implement plans, and promoting sustainable fisheries & aquaculture policies and programs.

He ended his presentation by informing the audience that the Blue Prosperity Coalition are actively looking for interested partners and encouraged the OCTs to reach out.

**Léonie Buschbeck, CPMR**

Ms Buschbeck presented the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) that brings together some 150 Regions from 25 States from the European Union and beyond. She noted that French Polynesia is a member of both OCTA and CPMR and St Maarten would soon join CPMR.

The CPMR maritime priorities are to reflect EU strategic ambitions for seas, oceans and coastal areas, ensure adequate resources via EMFF and all relevant EU funds, promote new and ambitious strategy for maritime industrial employment, develop the circular economy, protect the marine environment, and support young people as well as jobseekers.

Circular economy is of particular relevance to islands as they can be a good ground for testing it in areas like waste water treatment. As a result, it can also lead to more resilience and independence from other actors.

When it comes to international ocean governance, CPMR encourages regional authorities to participate in international discussion on the subject. For instance, CPMR facilitated participation of two member regions in Our Oceans conference in 2018. She also drew attention to the Intergroup at the EP on seas, rivers, islands, and coastal areas. 100 MEPs have supported the creation of this group and the decision about its establishment will be taken in December.

In 2020, a European Forum on Ocean Governance will be organised by CPMR.
Mr Maamaatuaiahutapu explained that the people of Polynesia have a special relationship with ocean. It has been supplying nourishment for the people since the beginning of time and providing the only source of protein for many coral atolls. Polynesians have learned how to sustainably manage their marine spaces and resources. He underlined that ocean is also a place of leisure and sport like va'a competition, surfing, and fishing.

In terms of marine management, many of the traditional measures have been tested and they were found to be unsuitable in case of French Polynesia. Instead, the Polynesians choose to employ “Rahui”, a traditional form of restriction on temporary access or use of a zone or resource to preserve food stocks. In April 2018, French Polynesia classified its entire EEZ as managed marine area, called "Tainui Atea ". This means that this maritime area remains open to fisheries but its management is based on appropriate measures ensuring sustainable use of resources such as prohibition on foreign vessels and use of harmful fishing practices.

Some Rahui still exist in their traditional form in remote islands like Rapa and Mai’ao where management decisions are made by a council of the elders. He also clarified why MPA is not the best tool for French Polynesia. The first issue with the MPAs is that the locals see it as a definitive prohibition on use of oceans that they perceive to be their home. The second issue is that the management of MPAs is highly centralised and given that French Polynesia covers a large area, it would be necessary to have a management committee on each island.

Speaking of the social value, Mr Maamaatuaiahutapu presented a new concept of Educational Managed Marine Area. It is an educational and eco-friendly project to help young people better understand and protect the marine environment. The children become part of a local project that draws on the expertise of the school and local municipality, along with user associations and environmental protection groups.

After the presentation, the representative of Wallis and Futuna shared that a similar practice to Rahui called Tapu exist on their territory. It can be applied to large areas or a single coconut tree by placing a banana leaf or a tissue on the tree.
Ms Rafaela expressed her strong support for the OCTs and contended that their interests are sometimes in the blind spot of the EC. Addressing the topics covered by the conference, the MEP mentioned that fisheries are a crucial source of food and income for many OCTs. Fisheries are also often passed on from generation to generation forming a part of the islanders’ culture.

She stressed that the impact of climate change on the oceans is a matter of concern. The OCTs would be particularly affected due to the loss of coral reefs and biodiversity resulting from a rise in water temperatures, increased strength of hurricanes, and the rising sea levels. Therefore, working towards meeting the Paris climate commitments should be a priority. In addition, the EU should assist the affected islands in a long term recovery efforts instead of only focusing on short term assistance in the direct aftermath.

As regards to the social value of oceans, children should be taught at a young age about both the riches and vulnerabilities of the seas. Every euro invested in education would generate ample benefits in terms of social value as well as technology and innovation.

She also underlined that the EU should ensure that Erasmus programme would be more accessible to the OCTs. There is also a strong need for inclusive policy making involving the OCTs people who should be proactively approached. Inclusive policy making also entails assessing impact of EU legislation and international agreement on the OCTs.

Wrapping up her remarks, Ms Rafaela assured that she would continue to visit the Dutch as well as other OCTs and extended an invitation to all the representatives to engage with her, especially when in Brussels. She reiterated that the OCTs could serve as hubs for new and innovative technology that could be rolled out in the EU, setting an example for everyone.
Ms Cormier spoke about how the Education Strategy on Environment and Sustainable Development implemented on the archipelago allowed to increase the social value of the marine biodiversity for the population through notably education and the creation of new ecotourism products. The environmental education project that began in 2008 had two primary objectives namely to improve the knowledge of the local population on biodiversity and to support the development of ecotourism.

Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon is a territory with a particular attachment to the sea and fishing that are components for local culture, leisure, and economy. The archipelago also has a particularly rich biodiversity.

The Education Strategy on Environment and Sustainable Development is multifaceted and one of its focal elements was the establishment of the Nature Interpretation Centre. The centre was established in a participatory manner, involving all the relevant stakeholders, including the general population. For example, the local community members were invited to provide items for the exhibition at the Centre this way ensuring ownership of everyone involved.

The Centre is a point of attraction for both locals and tourists thus stimulating economic activities on the islands. In addition to various educational activities taking place at the Centre, two ecotourism activities, namely eco-walks with guided hikes as well as a tour of marine environment by boat were also created. Overall, this project helps to discover the history, geology, geography, climate and biodiversity of the archipelago.

Other projects are being developed such as an application on biodiversity or the rehabilitation of a humid zone.
Bonaire, “First Blue Destination”, Edison E. Rijna, Governor of Bonaire

The Governor announced that Bonaire is the first blue destination in the world. 20 percent of the land and 100 percent of the sea are National Park area. Within the 20 percent of terrestrial National Park, Bonaire has a breeding ground for flamingos in particular.

Bonaire also has perfect conditions to be a living lab. The government aims to synergise planet, people and profit, embracing both public and private sector. In addition, the government programme is aligned to SDGs and the Blue Economy.

Mr Rijna listed examples of why Bonaire is a Blue Destination. Bonaire National Marine Park established in 1979 is one of the first ones in the Caribbean and thanks to it Bonaire is ranked as the third best diving location. Nature fee is imposed on all the divers and proceeds go to fund the nature foundation on the island. Furthermore, 40% of energy is sustainably produced by windmills. Bonaire also recognises the importance of partnerships and cooperation. For instance, Bonaire partnered with the University of Wageningen to set up the first Algae plant while the government is currently developing a Plan for 2030 in consultation with different stakeholders.

Signature of the Declaration on Oceans

The OCTs delegates signed the Declaration on Oceans during this signing session.
Adaptation to Climate change, Manuel Carmona Yebra, DG CLIMA

Mr Carmona Yebra began by recalling that oceans are subject to many pressures like pollution, organic matter dumping, plastic litter, unsustainable fishing, and eutrophication. Climate change is one of the major threats to oceans. Luckily, there are some common solutions to those problems.

Adaptation is a recent concept in the climate change policy that addresses inevitable impact such as sea level rise. Thanks to the big data, climate services, innovation and new technologies it is now possible to prepare and protect the low-lying and coastal areas.

Speaking of the low-lying areas, he noted that the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere contained a number of messages on climate change risks facing them. The Report also argued that transformative governance could play a role in risk mitigation. The way of governing, the way of planning land and ocean use, and the way economy works need to change. Another message from the report is that networks of MPAs can help maintain ecosystems not only by providing for carbon uptake and storage but also by providing adaptation benefits. They facilitate species movement poleward. However, in some areas ecosystem based adaptation will only work under low level of warming. As emissions are not reined in, it becomes more difficult for ecosystems to assist with adaptation.

He also noted that the Global Commission on Adaptation Report suggests that adaptation provides triple dividends in a form of avoided losses, economic benefits, as well as social and environmental benefits.

The EU Adaptation Strategy has three main objectives, namely promoting action by all member states, making EU level action climate proof, and promoting better informed decision-making. Given that so many EU citizens live in or close by the coastal areas, EU policies affecting land and sea interactions are pivotal. Examples of the relevant EU instruments include the Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning, the European and Maritime Fisheries Fund that provides funding for adaptation and mitigation of climate change in relation to fisheries, and Horizon 2020 research strand.

Concluding his intervention, Mr Carmona Yebra shared two takeaways. On the one hand, adaptation is effective but in some cases it will require tough choices. On the other hand, the good news is that awareness on adaptation is growing. It is a good investment that has multifaceted benefits and that relies on indigenous knowledge as well as democratic process.

While responding to a question about examples of tangible benefits from investment on adaptation, he highlighted that adaptation should be viewed as a public good.
Mr Shackell discussed the case of Henderson Island that has a dubious accolade of the most plastic polluted island in the world. Henderson is an uninhabited remote island that is one of the two raised coral atoll islands in the world. It is a world heritage site and home to endemic species.

He took part in the Henderson Expedition that reached the island thanks to the South Pacific Gyre and that discovered 6.5 tonnes of plastic waste. Due to the geographical specificities, the island cannot be cleaned completely. However, the expedition crew also aimed to gather scientific evidence and generate as much media coverage as possible to highlight the problem of plastic pollution worldwide.

When large amounts of plastic end up on a remote island 3500 miles away from the closest large population it should be a wake-up call for everyone. The waste removal off the beach is a costly, difficult and unsustainable task that is also futile in relation to microplastics.

Plastic pollution is a global problem that has accelerated in the past years and solutions lie outside Pitcairn government’s control. It is not possible to employ legislative measures either as it cannot be proved who is exactly responsible for this pollution.

The Deputy Governor ended his presentation on a hopeful note stating that putting public pressure on the polluter companies could lead to a change in their business practices. Individually people can also change their behaviour with plastics and collectively they can change the world.
Ms Zaandam highlighted that tackling challenges should be a collective effort as the government cannot be the sole driver of change. Undoubtedly, the community has the right to scrutinise the government’s efforts but at the same time people should also ask themselves what are they doing to be a part of the solution.

Unlike some other islands, Aruba actually generates a substantial amount of plastic waste that not only goes to the landfill but also ends up scattered around the island. This situation led to introduction of the plastic ban under the slogan “if not now, then when?”.

The plastic ban strategy has two stages. The ban on plastic bags with handles took effect in 2017 during the first phase while the second phase would lead to a ban on all single use plastic comprising import, production, sale, free give away of products made from plastic/polystyrene that are meant for single use, including utensils, plastic bags and straws. The second phase also entails a ban on oxybenzone.

One of the challenges encountered in response to the plastic ban is a pushback from the private sector. As a result, the government decided to communicate clearly, what is the scope of the ban and incentivise private sector to take responsibility as well. She also underlined that during the reform process, outreach is imperative. Even if a government has a limited budget, there has to be continuous communication with all the stakeholders. Ms Zaandam stressed that in addition to government’s efforts, members of civil society are taking various initiative by, for example, organising beach clean up or producing plastic free organic products.
Mr Dilrosun began by noting that, like other OCTs, Curaçao faces similar challenges including pollution, overexploitation, coastal degradation, and the effects of climate change. Since Curaçao has limited institutional capacity to effectively deal with these challenges, they decided to cooperate with the Waitt Institute to jointly draft and implement ocean policy.

Subsequently, numerous studies such as Economic Valuation of Curaçao’s Marine Resources and a Listening Tour with key stakeholders on ocean issues and solutions were carried out. One key finding that emerged from this process was that Curacao’s marine resources contribute substantially to the island’s economy. In 2017, the Council of Ministers approved the Ocean Policy Plan that is being currently implemented. In addition, overfishing on Curacao’s coral reefs and land based sources of pollution have been identified as main concerns for Curacao.

One of the major achievements since the implementation of the Plan began is the establishment of the Curaçao Marine Park in 2019. The government also found a private donor that offered to sponsor the management of the Park for five years. Given that ocean plays such a major role in the economies of the OCTs, Curacao wants to encourage all OCTs to create and implement a comprehensive ocean policy.
The Prime Minister recalled that the representatives of the OCTs have signed a very important declaration. He was content that the Declaration was not solely focused on challenges but also had clear commitments related to social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Mr Maamaatuaiahutapu expressed his contentment that the oceans found prominence on the international plane. It is important to act now as a matter of urgency. However, he cautioned there is a need for balance between sustainability and conservation efforts. He also noted that there not much headway on the international level whereas some of big countries are backsliding on their climate commitment.

Another significant issue highlighted by Mr Maamaatuaiahutapu is access to funding. Currently, the access to programmes can be restrictive. Financial tools and technical support should be accessible to the OCTs to help them achieve their commitments. He also highlighted that the climate and biodiversity are major issues that require integrated approach.

Regarding MPAs, Mr Maamaatuaiahutapu stated that the focus should shift from the size of the area to creating efficient management plans that work and can have quantifiable results. Instead of resorting to bans, efforts should be made to change people’s minds and behaviour.

He concluded his intervention proclaiming that the OCTs can be the change-makers, creating solutions and setting an example for bigger countries. Although the OCT Declaration is of a great importance, it will not suffice as long as the big EU countries are not convinced to take responsibility.

Mr Kleist explained that Greenland did not sign the Declaration because they are first required by law to translate it into the official languages. Informally the declaration was well received and considered to be within the principles that Greenland already adheres, also providing an impetus to make further improvements. He highlighted that science is extremely important in ocean management. For this reason, Greenland is having a new research vessel built that would also strengthen cooperation with neighbouring countries in line with the Declaration.

An island with challenging infrastructure conditions needs a possibility to be able to sustain itself. The indigenous population has a right for subsistence fishing and hunting. In addition, Greenland is one of the frontrunners in the climate change research.

The OCTs have a big role to play given their geographical location. At the same time, it is very important that all the nations comply and respect international law. Disregard for the internationally agreed legal framework is one of the reasons the pollution levels are as high. He wrapped up his comments by expressing hope that Greenland would be soon able to sing the Declaration as well.

Mr Edwards recalled the presentation about Henderson Island and the fact that the beaches were in part covered by fishing waste. In the Falkland’s, the islanders rely on fishing but they can also exercise control over what happens to ensure sustainable use and prevent pollution. That is unfortunately not the case outside of their jurisdiction.

He highlighted the problem of micro plastics that cover entire world. Plastics are everywhere but what is important is how they are disposed of. On the Falkland Islands, water dispensers were installed and new incinerator plant built to tackle plastic pollution. However, people need to change to get change. People need to change their mindsets and how they do things.
Mr Schultz commended the OCTs for taking a collective action through the Declaration. He reminded that France exercises jurisdiction over the second largest EEZ thanks to its OCTs. It also means that France has a great responsibility to its overseas communities that are facing many challenges due to their dependence on oceans. Metropolitan states have an obligation to broaden their knowledge about these territories, their ecosystems, and natural phenomena affecting them. For this reason, these states, including France, run specific research programmes. The research efforts are also essential to measure vulnerability of the OCTs and to identify the best way to tackle the challenges.

Another important priority for the state is to assist the OCTs’ communities and their governments with protection of their heritage, their environment, and their riches. From 2012 France has been supporting the local governments in development of MPAs together with the French Biodiversity Agency. The national strategy for MPAs is being revised to reinforce MPAs protection in line with the wish expressed by the French President Emmanuel Macron to have 30 percent of waters under the French jurisdiction designated as MPAs. The state helps for controlling and monitoring MPAs.

Mr Schultz reminded the importance to act also at the international level.

Finally, the MS should contribute to strengthening adaptation of the OCTs to climate change and natural disasters. There is a Law which has for objective to protect 75% of coral reefs by 2025. He reaffirmed that France is taking into account the challenges confronting the OCTs in developing the National Strategy for Integrated Coastline Management.

Concluding his remarks, Mr Schultz emphasised that the OCTs are extremely valuable to the EU, and particularly to France. They are a source of inspiration, as demonstrated by various projects presented throughout the conference. At the same time, the OCTs are a source of legitimacy for the EU in the context of global ocean governance.

Roger Edwards commented that the oceanographic resources are vulnerable hence the OCT populations are vulnerable too. Oceans must be preserved as a sustainable resource and illegal fishing remains one of the biggest challenges.

The Prime Minister of Curaçao reiterated that access to funding is cumbersome. Many OCTs have EEZ but the local inhabitants are not fully benefitting from them. New approach embracing shared prosperity principle should be adopted. The OCTs require access to additional funding to meet their commitments on oceans.

Mr Schultz affirmed that France is working to ensure that the EU funding programmes do not neglect the needs of the OCTs. All the Member States responsible for the OCTs should speak with one voice.
Ms Rafaela recalled that while the OCTs are different, ocean is what all of them have in common. She highlighted the need to work together with a strong commitment. There is also a need to protect the weakest while becoming stronger by protecting the nature, climate, and oceans.

She reiterated her commitment to bring the EU closer to the citizens, including those living in the OCTs. Ms Rafaela promised to advocate for more accessible EU funding for the OCTs. More information about funding opportunities should be readily available. Citing the example of the Dutch OCTs that are investing more efforts in knowledge and expertise on EU funding and programmes, she encouraged others to follow the suit.

The OCTs should be more involved in the policy making and receive more attention from the EU. Therefore, she announced that an OCT friendship group would be launched at the EP to facilitate cooperation with the relevant stakeholders in the OCTs. The Group will enable the OCTs to provide their input and it could be used to design better and more inclusive policy on the EU level.

European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella (video intervention)

The Commissioner began by recalling that oceans were largely absent from international agenda at the beginning of his tenure five years ago. However, times have changed and ocean related issues are widely discussed in different fora.

He also stressed that although the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere has drawn global attention to the urgency of challenges facing oceans, the people from OCTs did not require a scientific report to know what has been happening.

The EU understands the importance of the oceans. In the past years, ambitious actions were taken to reduce plastic pollution, protect marine environment, combat illegal fishing and make EU fisheries sustainable. The EU invested a lot of effort to build a global consensus on marine governance agenda that works to the advantage of the OCTs as well.

As the Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr Vella invested heavily in developing a sustainable Blue Economy that can respond to the majority of the societal concerns. It also opens new opportunities to the OCTs. The Commissioner encouraged the OCTs to take advantage of the EU Blue Economy calls.

MEP Samira Rafaela

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Mr Bijoux expressed his approval of the newly established friendship group at the EP. He stressed that it is not enough to just adapt to the climate change. There is an emergency and solutions need to be found. Together with the new President of the EC Ursula von der Leyen, he shares the ambitions expressed in the Green Deal. The OCTs have to be a part of the green ambition and build the Green Deal together.

There has to be a win-win solution whereby Europe protects the oceans and the OCTs while the OCTs focus on ecological innovation and transforming their lives with the Blue and Green Economies. It is clear that the OCTs have already embarked on many initiatives to achieve their objectives. The protection of oceans, survival of humanity and the indigenous cultures and talents requires working together. Concluding the intervention, he promised to communicate the OCTs messages at the EP and prioritise concrete actions.

As a response, the representative of Polynesia reiterated the importance of access to funding to realise their climate ambition. He also suggested that NGOs could be more involved with assistance to OCTs.

At the end of the political session, OCTs shared the Declaration of Oceans with the European Commission.
SESSION 6 – Collaboration and opportunities with other organisations and the EU

H2020 and Ocean Mission in Horizon Europe, Nicolas Segebarth, DG RTD

Mr Segebarth welcomed the OCT Declaration and noted that it shares a high degree of alignment with what the EC does, especially through their research programme.

Speaking about the relevant EU funding mechanism, he gave brief overview of what marine and maritime research covered in the Horizon 2020. There are several projects such as EONav Earth Observation for Maritime Navigation (AI), a real-time sail planning system, that have partners from the OCTs. He also encouraged OCTs to capitalise on the EU funding programmes.

Mr Segebarth highlighted a few calls for proposals which could be of interest for OCTs.

The main opportunities for the future will lay with the Horizon Europe programme. The new programme has three main objectives - strengthening the EU's scientific and technological bases and the European Research Area (ERA), boosting Europe's innovation capacity, competitiveness and jobs, and delivering on citizens' priorities, and sustaining our socio-economic model and values. The third objective has a strong focus on supporting achievement of the SDGs. The programme will have 35 per cent target for climate action while the Pillar of the Programme dedicated to Global Challenges is going to have an intervention completely dedicated to Seas, Oceans, and Inland Waters.

The real change compared to previous programme is a more inclusive approach through co-creation and co-design, involving all the services in the EC, EP, Member States and the public at large. There will also be two new instruments for implementation – Partnerships and Missions as well as Areas for international cooperation providing an appropriate framework to cooperate with the OCTs.

Research and Innovation missions are portfolios of actions across disciplines & instruments intended to achieve a bold, inspirational and measurable goal within a set timeframe with impact for society and policy making as well as relevance for a significant part of the European population and wide range of European citizens. The most relevant areas for the OCTs are healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters, and adaptation to climate change, including societal transformation. In relation to European Partnerships, they are supposed to introduce overall coherent framework, which brings all existing initiatives under one umbrella.

Responding to a question about inclusiveness of the new programme, Mr Segebarth reaffirmed that contribution from the OCTs at programme level is valuable, stressing that the OCTs are an ideal setting for many demonstrators addressing sea level rise and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
Ms Dinkova introduced Copernicus, the flagship EU Earth observation programme. It is a great tool to monitor Earth, its ecosystems, oceans and atmosphere. It also can be used for civil protection and security by authorities in times of crises and natural disasters.

Copernicus uses data from the EU Earth observation satellites but when needed data is also acquired from a range of private and commercial missions. All of this information is tailored and processed to deliver very concrete products meeting the needs of local and regional actors.

At the heart of the programme there are six operational services covering thematic areas including marine and climate areas. The operation of services is outsourced to competent agencies. For instance, the marine service is operated by Mercator Ocean International. The service looks at a range of ocean variables and the majority of this data is freely and fully available as Copernicus is considered to be a public collective good.

In terms of type of information available, she noted that there are 170 data products in addition to ocean monitoring indicators. To make this information relevant for the general public, Mercator publishes annual ocean state reports. The service also offers a lot of training and user support opportunities.

50 percent of the users of this data are businesses that deliver very concrete products and services in a variety of areas such as coastal monitoring. In this way, the service is also seen as a driver for the blue growth economy.

Answering inquiry about data archive, Ms Dinkova agreed that access to historic data is important. The Commission is working to secure convenient access to Copernicus data and negotiating to have open access to available archives.
Mr Leinemann reaffirmed that transformation of traditional maritime industries towards sustainability actually brings economic rewards. Speaking of relevant EU tools and programmes, he mentioned the "little brother" of Copernicus - Marine EMODnet. The marine data portal works with more than 100 organisations, that upload their data in the location based database. All the data is publicly available and comparable.

Regarding investment and the Blue Economy calls under the Maritime and Fisheries Fund, he noted that in the past years projects supporting economic development from the bottom up perspective were funded. Unfortunately, funds available under these calls are very limited. This year's call is coupled with commitments by private investors. In other words, if a project has secured co-funding from a private investor, it will have much better chances to be selected. Another relevant tool is the Bluelinvest platform that supports investment readiness and access to finance for early-stage businesses, SMEs and scale-ups in the blue economy.

On the topic of spatial planning, Mr Leinemann recalled the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive obliging the MS to finish their spatial plans by 2021. The EC is also working internationally with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in a project called Marine Spatial Planning Global aiming to adopt guidelines on transboundary maritime spatial planning.
Mr Marchesi presented the work of the EIB, a financial instrument used by the EC to finance growth. The EIB has a Clean Ocean initiative, with exclusive emphasis on tackling plastic pollution at the source. The main geographical focus of this initiative is Asia and Africa due to their significant contribution to plastic pollution.

The EIB is the biggest donor for climate action, including climate adaptation. Most of the funds are allocated to climate mitigation that is more easy to finance. In the future, financing for climate adaptation would increase. The EIB is also active in blue economy with offshore wind taking the lion’s share of funding.

Speaking about currently running initiatives, he mentioned the Sustainable Oceans Fund that works as a vehicle through which the EIB finances projects all over the world. It is a good example of a financial mechanism used by EIB to finance small projects. The EIB gives money to financial intermediaries to work on small projects.

The bank also has been working with the Caribbean Development Bank, channelling money through another institution to identify and finance projects ranging from disaster risk management to coastal protection. For EIB the biggest challenge is not to fund but to find good projects. He wrapped up his presentation by emphasising that oceans and climate adaptation are among the most prominent policy areas for the next years to come.
Wrap-up session and closure of the Conference by the OCTA Chair, Prime Minister of Curaçao, Eugene Rhuggenaath

Prime Minister of Curaçao thanked the OCTA secretariat, the moderator Martin Watson, the distinguished speakers, and participants.

He reminded that the OCTs are at the frontline of the challenges discussed during the conference. Unfortunately, it seemed that these challenges are what bound them. Until now. The OCT Declaration should be used to not only bring attention to the OCTs concerns but also to create opportunities and allow these opportunities to bind the OCTs.

Many inspirational initiatives were discussed and various opportunities were presented by the new friends from the EC. The Prime Minister also met with the EC Vice-President Frans Timmermans and spoke about the possibility of including the OCTs in the Green Deal.

Instead of being at the forefront of the negative effects, the islands can be at the forefront of the solutions. The OCTs do not only offer problems, they also offer solutions and inspiration. It does not need to start with governments or funds from elsewhere. The change can start at home, on the islands by making changes themselves.

All the presentations of the Event can be found here: https://drive.google.com/open?id=1amjRZSCTD-MEBsiCdgoSmoDuK_ebraFN
Excellency's,  
Members of the European Parliament,  
Representatives of the European Commission,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  

Good morning.

It is an honor and privilege to be able to chair the OCTA Ocean Conference – From the Poles to the Tropics, OCTs Blue Landscape”. The ocean is one of the topics that binds all of us as OCTs as we are all island nations surrounded by it.

One of the main problems of the ocean is that most people take it for granted. We don’t know how much it actually means. It is completely out of sight and out of mind for most of the world, and sometimes even for us who live on islands and see the ocean every day.

Oceans are the source of life. And it controls everything from the weather to the climate to even the oxygen we breathe.

Oceans also are the great protectors of humanity. The ocean is and has been protecting us by absorbing the heat and carbon dioxide. But protecting us has come at a great cost, its own health and sustainability.

Without a healthy ocean, you do not have a healthy planet. And ladies and gentlemen, our oceans are not healthy. And we need help to ensure this situation is altered.

Today’s conference is an excellent forum for this to take place, as we will have various sessions dealing with three main values that we have pertaining to oceans: environmental, economic and social.

First up this morning, we have the environmental values on the agenda.

In recent decades, many marine populations have experienced major declines in abundance, but we still know little about where management interventions may help protect the highest levels of marine biodiversity.

Just look at our coral, which also is part of our rich biodiversity. In the last 30 years we have lost 50% of the world’s coral.

This statistic is distressing for many reasons. Coral reefs provide or creates the environments where various societies catches their food. Without this people will go malnourished. However, it goes even further. Some of the most advanced medicines come from the sea. Medicine that can be used as treatment for viruses, bacterial infections and even cancer medication.

For this reason, we need to adequately protect our oceans. One possible idea for this can be a strategic vision for achieving Sustainable Marine Resources within the Exclusive Economic Zone. For most of us OCTs, our EEZ is larger than most of our territories on land.

There is a great need to ensure that it is managed by ourselves. This would need to happen in a sustainable manner in order to ensure that we benefit from economic activities such as fishing, but also ensure the biodiversity that exists.

This touches on the second session which is on economic values. Many of our countries makes use of the oceans for economic development and the development of our nation as a whole.
Ladies and gentlemen, the ocean is so much more than most people realize and its existence even affects those who do not think about it much or in areas that one does not think of. This is why I am pleased to see that towards the end of our day, we will be discussing the social value of oceans. Usually this is a forgotten, however as people living on island, we have a special relationship with the ocean, as it is a part of our lives. During my travels, I have noticed that this relationship is shared with all island people, whether we live in the Poles or in the Tropics.

The final act of the day we will come together or as we say in Curaçao HUNTU.

One of these steps we can all make today huntu, which is signing the OCT Declaration on Ocean. This declaration can be the start of a sustainable strategy to conserve our oceans, whilst making sure that it can aid in our development as well.

After the celebrations tonight however I expect everyone to be back here fresh and early to continue another packed day by addressing the challenges and solutions pertaining to our oceans.

It does not come at a surprise that we must talk about the effects of climate change on our oceans, as they are widespread and systematic.

Let us start off with the rise of sea temperature. When we hear that the temperature of the ocean has risen with 1 or 2 degrees, we may not think much of it at first. When you walk outside you usually don’t feel the difference if the temperature is 1 or 2 degrees higher.

But we should actually compare it to a human body. If there are any doctors in the room, what happens to a body if your temperature goes up 1 or 2 degrees? Your body suffers. The same happens for our oceans. And if left untreated, it could not just be fatal for the ocean, but for us as well.

Plastic is one of the dire issues that needs to be addressed, as there is more plastic in the ocean than there are stars in the Milky Way. And I applaud countries, such as Turks and Caicos Islands who have banned the use of single use plastic bags.

Now you may be wondering, mister Prime Minister, why would you start of this conference off on such a grim note? It’s simple actually. Because it is still not too late for us to do something. It is in our power to turn the damage back and we can do this together or huntu.

This is why our last session of this conference is dedicated to finding these partnerships. We do need to help of the international community including the European Commission to not just help us with funding, but to enable us; collaborate with us, and I am sure: we will not disappoint you.

There is a reason why I kept calling the ocean ours. I do not just mean that it belongs to OCTs alone, but to the entire world.

Unlike countries, the ocean does not have borders. The problem does not stay in one region, it spreads out. If an iceberg collapses and melts in Greenland, that can result in a higher sea level rise, which effects everyone else in the room.

This is why solutions that transcends borders and people are needed.

The ocean has always been a great love of mine, as I believe it is for many of us.

And as John F. Kennedy once said: “We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether it is to sail or to watch – we are going back from whence we came.”

It is my sincere hope that this conference will be beneficial to us all to safeguard the ocean for all of us and for the many generations that are yet to come.

Quite simply:
No ocean no life,
No ocean no us,
Thank you.
Annex 2 – Speech of Pascal Lamy

“nos océans et nous”

Monsieur le Président,
Mesdames et messieurs les Premiers Ministres,
Mesdames, Messieurs,

Un mot d’abord pour vous remercier de m’avoir convié à vos travaux, que vous avez décidé de consacrer cette année aux enjeux océaniques et maritimes qui vous sont communs, et qui nous sont communs.


De ces différents points de vue, je vois quatre enjeux globaux: l’environnement, l’économie, la géopolitique et la science.

L’environnement parce que nous vivons un drame environnemental, océanique ; l’économie parce que l’on constate maintenant les impasses d’une économie bleue non soutenable ; la géopolitique parce qu’elle demeure une dimension essentielle de ces espaces maritimes et enfin la science, tant il nous reste à connaître de nos systèmes marins.

Je n’insiste pas sur l’environnement: il est clair la crise est d’une ampleur à la fois considérable et sous-estimée. Le réchauffement climatique, la dégradation de la biodiversité, les pollutions, les pullulations, l’augmentation du niveau des mers, aucun de ces dangers ne recule aujourd’hui, entraînant la mort lente des océans, c’est-à-dire du poumon le plus essentiel pour la vie sur cette planète - notamment parce qu’il absorbe entre un quart et un tiers des émissions de gaz carbonique.

L’économie, parce que la mer est la septième économie de cette planète - et devrait d’ailleurs siéger à ce titre au G7 ou au G20. Mais si la mer siégeait au G20, elle y siégerait comme un grand malade parce que nous, les humains, nous prenons trop dans l’océan et nous y rejetons trop – même si on ne sait pas trop combien. Ce qui est sûr c’est que c’est trop et que l’on en voit l’impact sur l’appauvrissement des ressources, sur la qualité des grands fonds marins, sur la dégradation du littoral. On connaît la solution qui est de faire de l’économie bleue une économie circulaire – mais on en est encore extrêmement loin.
La géopolitique c’est une dimension qui a toujours influé et qui influera toujours sur la politique des grands acteurs mondiaux. La maîtrise des mers a toujours été un instrument de puissance – pour le constater, il suffit de regarder comment la Chine est en train de développer sa présence maritime, pas seulement dans la région océanique et maritime qui est la sienne mais aussi ailleurs, et de voir se construire ces gigantesques projets d’infrastructure de la nouvelle version de la route de la soie, qui sont destinés à véhiculer la pénétration de la Chine dans l’économie mondiale. Et vous avez rappelé qu’avec ses 17 millions de km², notre espace maritime commun est le premier au monde. Enfin la science, parce que la plupart des phénomènes physiques, chimiques, biologiques, géophysiques de cet immense univers marin sont encore largement inconnus, et non mesurés. Nos océans ont aussi un potentiel encore à peine entamé de nouveaux produits et de nouvelles technologies – pensons aux algues pour remplacer une partie de notre alimentation carnée avec les conséquences positives que cela aurait sur le changement climatique ou à tout ce qui concerne par exemple le domaine des cosmétiques. Il y a là des opportunités formidables, pour ne pas parler des promesses du biomimétisme, qui est aussi une nouvelle frontière à explorer.

Il faut donc investir dans le savoir et dans la science pour combler ce grand déficit de connaissances que nous avons vis-à-vis de l’océan, qui est incomparable, en termes de cartographie par exemple, avec ce que nous savons de notre Terre, laquelle ne recouvre jamais qu’un tiers de la surface de la planète, ou même de l’espace: on sait un peu près ce qui se passe sur la lune ou sur Mars, mais pas dans la fosse des Mariannes, quelque 10 km en dessous de la surface. D’où cette mission, dont la Commission européenne m’a confié la présidence, et qui a deux objectifs, contenus l’un dans l’autre comme des poupées russes.

Le premier qui est de l’ordre de la recherche, du développement et de l’innovation, qui est d’identifier, en matière océanique et de systèmes aquatiques un ou plusieurs grands sujets d’investissement pour le prochain programme cadre de recherche et d’innovation européenne, qui se déroulera entre 2021 et 2026. Ce programme devrait être de l’ordre de la centaine de milliards d’euros et il faudra en guider l’allocation en partie par des “gros tickets” de l’ordre de quelques centaines de millions ou du milliard d’euros.

Le deuxième objectif consiste à tracer autour des thématiques identifiées les contours des biens publics européens leur correspondant et où l’Europe veut être leader mondial en faisant appel à toutes les politiques et à tous les instruments de l’Union Européenne. Il ne suffit pas de dire “en matière d’océan et de systèmes aquatiques, voilà où nous devons investir quelques centaines ou quelques milliard d’euros en recherche, en innovation et en développement ». Il s’agit aussi de bâtir autour de ces investissements l’ensemble de politiques publiques qui permettront de donner à cet investissement supplémentaire la portée qu’il mérite dans des domaines essentiels.

On est donc sur des sujets assez considérables qui méritent beaucoup de réflexion, d’imagination, de débats, que cette mission océans a pour objet de mener, avec le concours des collègues qui m’entourent et qui proviennent de divers milieux spécialisés dans ces questions et de divers États membres de l’Union.

Je termine mon propos par un plaidoyer et par un souhait que vous me permettrez d’exprimer et qui est à double détente.

En premier, je souhaite que ces questions scientifiques trouvent la place qu’à mon avis elles méritent dans le projet de déclaration sur lequel vous allez travailler. L’enjeu scientifique devrait faire partie de notre coopération, de notre association, et figurer, de mon point de vue, parmi les moyens de l’approfondir à l’avenir.

Le deuxième serait que notre mission océans puisse bénéficier de votre contribution sous forme d’une courte liste de priorités que vous souhaiteriez voir retenues. Je ne doute pas que votre groupe de 25 Pays et Territoires d’Outre-Mer aient quelques idées en la matière, et je vous en remercie d’avance de nous en faire part.

Je conclurai d’un mot : l’urgence. Mon sentiment est que le moment des discours sur ces grandes questions est derrière nous et que nous devons très vite passer à l’action. Ensemble, ce serait beaucoup plus efficace !