



WORKING TOGETHER ON CLIMATE
CHANGE, OCEANS AND CLEAN ENERGY

—
TRAVAILLER ENSEMBLE À L'ÉGARD
DES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES,
DES OCÉANS ET DE L'ÉNERGIE PROPRE

**CHAIRS' SUMMARY:
G7 JOINT MINISTERIAL SESSION
ON HEALTHY OCEANS, SEAS
AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**



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1. Under the auspices of Canada's 2018 G7 Presidency, the G7 Ministers of Environment, Oceans, and Energy were joined by representatives from Jamaica, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Norway, Seychelles, and Vietnam as well as leaders from international organizations, industry and youth in discussions held in Halifax on September 20, 2018, under the overarching theme of Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities.
2. Healthy oceans and seas promote economic, social and environmental well-being and play an important role in the global climate system, and support communities, jobs and livelihoods, food security, human health, biodiversity, economic prosperity and way of life. However, marine ecosystems are facing major threats, including ocean warming, acidification and sea-level rise, as well as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overexploitation of fish stocks and marine pollution from a range of sources, including plastics.
3. In particular, it is necessary to work with all relevant partners, including local, Indigenous, remote coastal and small island communities, as well as with the private sector, international organizations and civil society to identify and assess policy gaps, needs and best practices. This approach will support the leadership and empowerment of women and youth as agents of positive change.

Plastics and Marine Litter

4. Ministers observed that plastics are a revolutionary material and play an important role in our economy and daily lives. Ministers underscored the urgency and importance of taking action on plastic pollution and marine litter. Many participants noted the growing accumulation of plastic waste in the oceans.
5. Ministers welcomed the progress achieved to date by G7 partners on marine litter and plastics including under the Toyama Framework on Material Cycles, the G7 Bologna Roadmap for resource efficiency, and the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter and committed to continue the swift implementation of these commitments. Ministers also requested the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency to explore measures and partnerships in priority areas of the lifecycle of plastics.
6. Ministers agreed that there is an urgent need to take a lifecycle approach to plastics stewardship and highlighted actions they are undertaking both domestically and internationally. In this regard, the Ocean Plastics Charter was noted by some Ministers, who indicated their intentions to advance its implementation. Ministers also welcomed continued efforts on marine plastic litter at the G20. Another delegation noted that not all G7 members endorsed the Ocean Plastics Charter, and it therefore lacks G7 consensus.

7. Ministers observed that research and innovation were key areas for prioritization and to this end, agreed to launch the G7 Innovation Challenge to Address Marine Plastic Litter to promote scalable solutions to reduce plastic waste and marine litter, including technological and social innovations in plastics use and management. G7 members are undertaking international and/or domestic initiatives, individually or jointly, in support of a common objective to promote innovation in addressing marine plastic pollution by managing plastics more sustainably throughout the whole lifecycle. Many participants raised the importance of addressing single use plastics and other delegations emphasized more effective waste management solutions.
8. Ministers emphasized that action to reduce plastic waste requires action by all, including all levels of government, business, civil society, women, children and youth. They also noted that bringing everyone together through global partnerships and alliances such as United Nations Environment Program, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the World Economic Forum, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and others, has the potential to further accelerate the global momentum to address plastic at all stages of its lifecycle. Sharing best practices, lessons learned and challenges was also seen as a necessity and welcomed the offer of the Presidency to provide leadership in this area.
9. Ministers welcomed industry leadership and innovation in improving the sustainability of their products and operations and noted that governments and industry need to work together to advance efforts to shift to a more circular and efficient economy. Discussions also highlighted industry leadership adopting new business models to improve resource efficiency, reduce environmental impact and seize circular economy opportunities including through extended producer responsibility.
10. Ministers heard from outreach countries about the impacts of plastic waste and marine litter on their environment and communities and underscored the need to continue and strengthen support for developing countries that are taking leadership to prevent the entry of plastic waste in the marine environment, with a particular focus on capacity building for recycling, and waste management infrastructure.
11. Ministers noted the efforts by G7 members on scientific advice cooperation on microplastics, and welcomed the commitment by Canada and the European Commission to host a workshop in 2019 and the invitation for all G7 partners to participate.

Sustainable Oceans and Fisheries

Joint Collaboration to Tackle IUU Fishing

12. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing can impact food and economic security of communities dependent on fishery resources, thereby affecting millions of people, including many vulnerable coastal communities. IUU fishing threatens sustainable fisheries management, marine and freshwater ecosystems and their associated biodiversity. In accordance with the rights and responsibilities as coastal, flag, port, and market states, Ministers recognized that we must protect the ocean from overexploitation, including through the use of science-based resource management.
13. Ministers noted the characteristics of IUU fishing as a global activity that depends upon access to profitable outlets, and given that G7 countries represent the major share of the world market for fisheries products, combatting IUU fishing can only be successful if all countries act in a cooperative manner.

14. Ministers acknowledge the important ongoing work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to improve global fishing transparency and the vital work of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), and stressed that existing measures, such as the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Catch Documentation Schemes should be adopted and effectively implemented.
15. Within this framework, some Ministers agreed to develop, where appropriate, stronger public-private partnerships to deploy innovative new tools, platforms and technology to better identify vessels that engage in, and those that support, IUU fishing.
16. Given the importance of ensuring the welfare and safety of personnel and crew aboard fishing vessels, including through preventing human trafficking, forced labour, and other unacceptable forms of work in the fishing sector, Ministers underscored the need for cooperation among Interpol, the FAO, the IMO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) on labour issues related to fishing.
17. Ministers also recognized that urgent efforts are needed to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing and IUU fishing and the need to collectively address this through effective disciplines in the World Trade Organization (WTO).
18. Canada expressed its priority to follow up with G7 partners to explore additional opportunities for collaboration and partnerships in addressing IUU fishing with a focus on ensuring coordinated action in addressing this important issue.

Mobilizing Efforts on Ocean Science and Marine Protection

19. Ministers recognized that high quality, relevant data are essential for understanding and effectively managing the myriad threats that our oceans and seas are facing and can provide business certainty for sustainable investment in the blue economy. Ocean observation systems give nations the capacity to identify data gaps, assess ocean risk, inform decision-making processes, and address problems in real time. In light of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), Ministers agreed to work together to enhance oceanographic data collection to fill gaps, while ensuring that such collection is effectively coordinated to avoid duplicating existing efforts and to improve conditions for sustainable development of the ocean.
20. Ministers recognized that global efforts are underway to advance marine protection. Science-based Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures are mechanisms to protect the marine environment. Ministers noted the need to ensure MPAs are not “mere paper parks,” including in the Southern Ocean.
21. Ministers acknowledged existing commitments with respect to conservation of coastal and marine areas, such as within the framework of SDG 14.5 and Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, and the importance of the ongoing scientific and technical processes to further define marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures in order to halt the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity, taking into account the need for these efforts to be science-based and to address clear management or conservation objectives.

22. Ministers welcomed the negotiations taking place at the United Nations with regard to the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.
23. Ministers encouraged the policy and technical experts of the G7 Working Group on the Future of Seas and Oceans to meet before the end of 2018 to agree on a work plan to support G7 priorities, in particular around developing stronger scientific knowledge and realizing a more efficient and effective network of scientific maritime and ocean observing.
24. Ministers noted their support for the agency, leadership and participation of women in developing strategies for marine conservation, and encouraged the collection of gender-disaggregated data wherever practicable.

Working Lunch

25. Ministers received a presentation of the report of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) delivered by Ambassador Isabelle Hudon, co-chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Council for Canada's G7 Presidency. They noted the crosscutting nature of gender equality and the importance of accounting for the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls, as well as supporting women's leadership on climate and oceans issues. Ministers applauded France's decision to continue GEAC's work during its 2019 G7 Presidency.
26. Ministers received presentations from the winners of the Oceans Youth Innovation Challenge, Mathilde Jutras from Canada and Kaoru Yokono from Japan, as well as the representatives of the Oceans Partnership Summit. They applauded the leadership of youth and civil society on these issues and noted the promise of innovative solutions, including building public-private partnerships and action alliances to drive innovation on plastics, encouraging the leadership of women and Indigenous peoples in the fishing industry, and developing partnerships between the financial sector, the insurance industry, non-profits, and other actors to identify coastal risk and build resilience, including through innovative finance.

Resilient Coasts and Communities

27. Recognizing the devastating impacts of extreme weather events in recent years, particularly in vulnerable coastal communities, G7 Ministers highlighted their commitments to help strengthen the resilience of coastal communities, by supporting well-informed development planning, effective emergency preparedness, and recovery efforts to "build back better." Effective strategies for resilience were also discussed, such as nature-based solutions, e.g., conserving and/or restoring mangroves, wetlands, and coral reefs, resilient infrastructure, coastal management strategies, and early warning capacity.
28. G7 Ministers also emphasized the particular vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and other low-lying developing countries to the impacts of extreme weather events, slow onset events and climate change as well as the importance of the ocean economy to livelihoods. They reiterated the importance of enhanced efforts aimed at building their resilience, while stimulating innovation and economic growth, including through enhanced regional cooperation.

29. Recognizing the importance of earth observation data and tools in enhancing coastal resilience for vulnerable communities, G7 Ministers and Heads of Delegation agreed to launch the G7 Initiative on Earth Observation and Integrated Coastal Zone Management which will support Small Island Developing States and other coastal communities in developing countries.
30. Ministers discussed innovative financing instruments, such as risk insurance for natural infrastructure, debt pooling, debt-for-nature swaps, and green/blue bonds, which represent promising pathways for attracting private investment in sustainable, quality and resilient infrastructure and building back better after extreme weather events.
31. Ministers agreed that clean and resilient energy technologies and systems as well as nature-based solutions, are an essential part of increasing the overall resiliency of coastal communities at home and internationally. Clean and resilient energy systems support critical operations and infrastructure in the context of emergency response and recovery efforts, such as communication, hospitals and water treatment facilities.
32. Ministers agreed that there is a need to explore how innovation and energy technology can further help coastal communities better withstand the devastating effects of severe weather events and support respective efforts to transition to clean and resilient energy systems.
33. Ministers' agreed to use the convening power of the G7 to encourage further collaboration in accelerating the development and deployment of these systems, by sharing lessons learned domestically and internationally in deploying innovation and energy technology to increase resilience of energy systems.
34. SIDS leadership to transition toward cleaner and more resilient energy systems that are decentralized and based on renewable and diverse energy sources was emphasized by Ministers. G7 members' contributions to support SIDS efforts to build clean and resilient energy systems, enhance collaboration and knowledge transfer, and build back better, stronger, and smarter was also highlighted.
35. Ministers welcomed the efforts of international organizations to support SIDS and coastal communities' efforts to develop and deploy clean and resilient energy systems.
36. Ministers committed to advance work with investors, insurers, multilateral and non-governmental organizations, and international financial institutions to scale and advance innovative means for catalyzing investments for sustainable infrastructure, particularly in SIDS and LDCs.