



PRESS RELEASE: 15 MAY 2020

Palau – Bringing *Local to Global Action* at Our Ocean Conference 2020

Koror 15.05.20: The Government of the Republic of Palau today announced the postponement of the Our Ocean Conference 2020, previously scheduled to be held from 17-18 August in *Koror*, Palau. The new dates will be **7-8 December 2020**.

This decision reflects global concern at the spread and public health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty as to when travel restrictions will be eased.

President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, said: “Protecting the health and well-being of the Palauan public and those of visiting dignitaries and guests is paramount. Global attention now is rightly dedicated to saving lives, containing the pandemic, and delivering immediate economic responses”.

Our Ocean 2020 marks the first time that the Our Ocean Conference will be hosted by a small island developing state. The conference will draw particular attention to island perspectives to highlight how safeguarding our ocean is essential for achieving sustainable development.

The theme of the Conference – *Local to Global Action for Our Ocean* – will draw on Palau’s rich tradition as an ocean society to set a course towards a sustainable ocean economy that all of humanity will depend on, particularly in a post-pandemic world. Ocean action is ever more urgent to ensure its protection, enable humanity to live in balance with ocean ecosystems, and ensure a ‘blue-green’ recovery to the pandemic.

“As the global dialogue turns to how to build back better, we must also implement blue recoveries, and take the opportunities to scale up ambition towards a sustainable ocean economy. The Our Ocean Conference 2020 will be the place to showcase partnership and commitments towards this blue recovery,” said President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau.

Our Ocean 2020 will focus on six Areas of Action, convening partners from across the globe to identify solutions and make commitments to manage marine resources, increase the ocean’s resilience to climate change and safeguard its health for generations to come.

The conference invites governments, civil society organisations and businesses to submit new commitments, updates on previous commitments, and proposals for side events from June 2020 onwards.



Invitations to participate and a provisional conference agenda will be issued in September 2020. Further information will be posted on the [Our Ocean Conference 2020 website](#) in due course.

For information and interview requests, please contact patricia@communicationsinc.co.uk

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Notes to editors:

For more information please visit <https://www.ourocean2020.pw/>

Palau will host the 7th Our Ocean conference. Previous hosts have included the governments of the United States (2), Chile, the European Union, Indonesia and Norway.

The Our Ocean conference aims to build partnerships between government, industry, science and civil society, putting knowledge, technology and finance into action to meet the challenges facing the ocean and enable protection and sustainable use to go hand in hand so that the ocean can continue to provide for the needs of future generations.

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Past commitments can be viewed at <https://www.ourocean2020.pw/commitments/>.

Palau's ocean conversation practices extend back thousands of years. The tradition of Bul is a moratorium declared by Palau's traditional leaders that places an immediate halt to the over-consumption or destruction of a species, place or thing. Bul has inspired one of the World's most ambitious ocean conservation initiatives to date. This tradition is not only aimed at protecting Palau's marine resources, but also at protecting the world's tuna stocks - in the form of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary Act.

Palau was one of the first countries in the world to incorporate environmental protection into its immigration laws. Visitors to the island are required to sign the Palau Pledge on arrival, which raises awareness of the small changes that tourists can do to help preserve the beauty of its natural environment for future generations.

To learn more about Palau, visit [Pristine Paradise Palau](#)

Local to Global Action for Our Ocean

The Republic of Palau will host the seventh Our Ocean Conference on 7 and 8 December 2020 – as economic recoveries to the coronavirus pandemic pick up steam. While political landmarks in what was to have been a ‘super-year’ for nature and the environment in 2020 have been postponed, the task of building back better, and setting a course for a more balanced relationship between humanity and nature is ever more urgent. New biodiversity frameworks and climate NDCs await in 2021 – and increasing ocean ambition has a pivotal contribution to make.

‘Local to Global Action for the Ocean’ will draw on Palau’s rich tradition as an ocean society to set a course towards a sustainable ocean economy that all of humanity will depend on. 2020 also marks the first year of the implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, the modern expression of an ancient conservation tradition. The PNMS is the foundation of Palau’s preparations for the age of sustainable development.

Our Ocean 2020 marks the first time that the Our Ocean Conference will be hosted by a small island developing state. The conference will draw particular attention to island perspectives to highlight how safeguarding our ocean is essential for achieving sustainable development.

The conference will convene some 500 participants, including established and emerging ocean leaders from government, business, academia and civil society, to build new partnerships to catalyse global action for the ocean and reverse the ocean health crisis.



A Wave of Ocean Action

Each panel discussion at Our Ocean 2020 will reflect this broader theme, with the express purpose of showing how local ocean actions and innovations drawn from diverse contexts can translate into raising the level of global ocean ambition.

‘From Local to Global Action for the Ocean’ follows the launch of Blue Papers on challenges and solutions for transformative ocean action over the course of 2020 by the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. Through both the panel discussions and the announcements of new and updated commitments, Our Ocean 2020 will showcase how emerging action coalitions are leading the way towards the transformations set forth by the High-Level Panel.

Our Ocean 2020 will continue the strong commitment to accountability that is a hallmark of the Our Ocean Conferences. Specifically it will provide opportunities to report on progress made on previous commitments and take stock of actions yet to be completed. This accountability is key to providing momentum for the next phase of ocean action, including new commitments.

Building Generation Ocean

The ocean is deeply rooted in the cultures, identities, and histories of ocean people. But this connection to the ocean must be nurtured with each generation to ensure that we protect life in the ocean in order to produce and prosper from its bounty and beauty. Our Ocean 2020 will highlight the contributions of youth to resetting humanity's relationship with the ocean, and showcase youth-led entrepreneurial and innovative ideas for ocean action.

The beginning of the UN Decade for Ocean Science in 2021 also promises to ensure that ocean action is guided by the best science. As we learn even more about the ocean, we understand that we need to combine conservation with sustainable use, and that action today safeguards the ocean for tomorrow.

Visit: ourocean2020.pw

Themes

The conference will be framed to respond to the global context for the ocean economy, including pandemic recovery, and showcase the relevance of Palau's signature initiatives for a wider audience. The themes mirror key transformations developed by the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and are also linked directly to SIDS concerns. They invite engagement from other stakeholders to join existing coalitions and partnerships for action or initiate new ones.

<p>Climate change</p>	<p>Climate stresses on the ocean are becoming more and more apparent, as highlighted in the IPCC special report on the ocean. The contribution of the ocean to both mitigating and adapting to climate change is being increasingly recognised. This panel will consider aspects of how the carbon value of blue ecosystems can be enhanced, so that the mitigation and adaptation potential of the ocean can be fully realised. The panel will also discuss how measures that increase the resilience of fishing and coastal communities to adverse climate impacts can be scaled up.</p>
<p>A clean ocean</p>	<p>'Floating garbage patches' and ocean dead zones have seized the world's attention as signs of humankind's impacts on nature. Marine pollution, including from plastics, undermines food security, human health and marine biodiversity. While clean-up efforts have become popular focal points for public action, more systemic changes are needed, especially at the land-sea nexus. This panel will examine pathways towards the transition to circular economies and achieving zero discharge into the ocean.</p>
<p>Sustainable blue economies</p>	<p>For too long the ocean has been treated as an inexhaustible resource. But like all resources, failures to allow regeneration are failures of planning and management, and a failure to properly account for the economic and social value of the resource. This panel will focus on how building a sustainable blue economy will require developing plans to do so – and to manage 100% of the ocean as integral parts of cultures, livelihoods, human health, well-being, and the economy.</p>
<p>Protected areas</p>	<p>Well designed and effectively managed Marine Protected Areas are well-known tools for biodiversity conservation and management. But they are also increasingly being recognised for their contribution to other dimensions of sustainable development, including climate action and food security. This panel will highlight that fully protected MPAs can contribute to the 'triple bottom-line' of biodiversity, climate, and nutrition, and it will consider strategies to maximise their effectiveness.</p>
<p>Sustainable food from the ocean</p>	<p>Humanity will rely increasingly on the ocean as a source of healthy food, but a third of all targeted fish stocks are overfished. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing pose continuing threats to fish sustainability, livelihoods and safety. This panel will examine options to optimize artisanal fishing and mariculture, especially for developing countries, for the benefit of coastal communities closest to fishery resources.</p>
<p>Maritime security</p>	<p>The ocean is all too often an unsafe place, where human rights and security are elusive. Achieving a safe and secure ocean will protect the communities that are the most vulnerable and most reliant on it, through the engagement of people from all dimensions of society. This panel will highlight innovations and models for transnational cooperation among all stakeholders that can help overcome governance gaps to provide peace and security on the world's oceans.</p>

Our Ocean 2020 PALAU



Save the date

7-8 December 2020
Invitation to follow

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For more information, please visit www.ourocean2020.pw