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Intergovernmental  
Oceanographic  
Commission

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Statement by Vladimir Ryabinin  
Executive Secretary, IOC-UNESCO

Ladies and gentlemen,  
All courtesies observed,

Warm greetings to SBSTA from the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the home of ocean science in the United Nations system.

I think it was an essential step for the UNFCCC to establish SBSTA and the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue. Let me quote in this connection the deliberations from the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, that ocean solutions can help cover 20% of the carbon gap that is needed to remain within 1.5 degrees of warming.

The GCOS Status Report highlights remaining gaps in ocean observations that would be of direct relevance to climate, especially along continental boundaries, the polar oceans, and the marginal seas.

The IOC is the lead agency for the Global Ocean Observing System. GOOS also has conducted the first survey of observing programmes measuring 13 biological Essential Ocean Variables that would be key in understanding the carbon cycle and also the impact of climate change on ocean life. The coverage of biological EOVS is actually uneven and very sparse, currently we have only 7% of the ocean surface covered by those observations. These results are alarming. They show a lack of information where it is needed them most, particularly in high biodiversity areas that also experience the most intense human pressure. This is critical for the ocean-climate-human nexus.

How to change the situation?

I would like to draw your attention to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030, that IOC is leading on behalf of the UN system. The mission of the Decade is transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and the ocean.

Please do engage in the Decade. The current call for Decade Actions is actually including the ocean-climate nexus as a priority.

COP-26 is seen as the “last best chance for the planet.” Let us include in consideration all of the planet, including 70% of its surface, 90% of its habitable space - the ocean - and seek climate solutions that are also ocean solutions.

I thank you very much for your attention and wish you very good work.