

# INDISPENSABLE OCEANS

## **Indispensable Ocean: Aligning Ocean Health and Human Well-Being**

**A report by the Blue Ribbon Panel, 21 global leaders in government, industry, conservation, and academia**

The ocean is a critical part of earth's life-support system and vital for the well-being of humanity. Once thought to be limitless, the ocean's resources are showing serious signs of deterioration and depletion on a global scale. Yet there are solutions. Properly designed, integrated efforts can result in sustainable and shared economic development, poverty reduction, and healthy marine ecosystems.

As a diverse panel of leaders, we have come together to lend collective voice toward building solutions for the ocean and the people who depend on it. We have the opportunity and responsibility to rapidly achieve a more sustainable use of resources on land and in the ocean to avoid causing irreversible change to the environment and society. We can avoid jeopardizing the long-term viability of communities, industries, governments, and conservation efforts alike.

We call for scalable and inclusive partnerships that span the full spectrum of stakeholders and which yield positive outcomes in the next decade. No single approach will be sufficient to address the complexity of the issues that face the ocean today. Solutions must be multidimensional and integrate all aspects of the socio-ecological system.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to solving the urgent problems facing the ocean. To ensure equitable benefits, long-term sustainable economic growth, and a healthy ocean, we must develop dynamic solutions that integrate site-sensitive approaches tailored to particular socio-ecological systems. To get started, we propose five high-level principles to guide the selection and prioritization of initiatives aimed at aligning ocean health and human well-being: (1) sustainable livelihoods, social equity, and food security; (2) a healthy ocean; (3) effective governance systems; (4) long-term viability and (5) capacity building and innovation.

Well-structured public-private partnerships that resolve pressing ocean issues by incorporating all five principles should be developed and leveraged. These will require leadership and the ability to envision and create inclusive structures to benefit all partners and maintain functioning ocean ecosystems.

Launched by the World Bank and supported by more than 140 organizations, the Global Partnership for Oceans was created to improve ocean health and human well-being. We support and endorse this formation and urge the Partnership to adopt our guiding principles. Our recommendations have been designed to help the Global Partnership for Oceans, or any institution investing in oceans, achieve positive impact and sustainable outcomes.

We stand at a point in history where it is neither too late nor impossible to turn the tide to restore ocean health. A new approach, like the Global Partnership for Oceans, can bring about the transformation required to change our course.

[www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org](http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org)

-Ove Hoegh-Guldberg  
Chair, Blue Ribbon Panel