

A PATH TO 2020 AND BEYOND: PROTECTION OF CANADA'S OCEANS

10 key messages from OCEANS20

Canada's *Oceans Act* is 20 years old, yet its full implementation has yet to be realized. To meet the increasing challenges facing our oceans, leaders and practitioners came together in June 2017 at the Oceans20 workshop in Ottawa to chart a path to:

- achieve effective protection for Canada's ocean by 2020
- meet our legal obligations to protect biodiversity, and
- set the foundation for the next two decades to help ensure thriving ocean ecosystems that continue to support our cultures and livelihoods.

The following key messages emerged from active dialogue and expert perspectives:

Build a strong legal toolbox

1

Strengthen the *Oceans Act* with amendments requiring minimum protection standards, co-governance with Indigenous nations, maintenance of ecological integrity and connectivity, and application of the precautionary principle.

2

Align laws and policies with guidance from the International Union Conservation for Nature (IUCN). The IUCN provides valuable global guidance on protected areas legislation, protected area categories and their application to marine protected areas (MPAs), including minimum protection standards, legislated timelines, and adaptive management.

3

Affirm the imperative to achieve reconciliation and recognize Indigenous jurisdiction, laws, and governance authorities. Create a healthier relationship between Indigenous nations and Canada by expanding Indigenous governance roles, explicitly endorsing Indigenous co-management arrangements, and recognizing Indigenous Protected Areas.

4

Adopt best global practices and standards in the *Oceans Act*, and associated regulations, policies and practices. A wealth of experience exists in Canada and around the world on effective science-based legal provisions for integrated management that protects ocean biodiversity.

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Allocate funding and build capacity

5

Create capacity for meaningful stakeholder participation at all levels. Strong public participation in decision-making is a key for the success and acceptance of MPAs. We need to consider community interests, knowledge and values, and determine how to engage and incorporate them throughout the planning process. Use capacity development to support co-governance and shared management.

6

Make a long-term commitment to sustained funding for MPAs recognizing the need for financial and other support after designation occurs. Effective MPAs require management plans, advisory committees, public outreach and monitoring and enforcement, and dedicated secure funding for these functions.

7

Enable enhanced collaboration within and among governments through multiple methods, including completion and implementation of agreements such as Memoranda of Understanding, and joint strategies on MPA network planning and marine spatial planning.

Fully implement Canada's *Oceans Act*

8

Designate science-based MPAs and MPA networks that require no-take, highly protected areas and adhere to the goal of ecological integrity. Effective protection for marine ecosystems requires that decisions be based on the best available natural and social science.

9

Complete MPA network planning on all three of Canada's coasts. Accelerate MPA designation and MPA network completion to protect ecological connections between marine species and ecosystems.

10

Embed MPAs in Marine Spatial Plans. Effective conservation requires an integrated approach with MPA networks as one key component of comprehensive marine spatial plans.