CONTRIBUTION 8.6

The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development: Potential for Regional Ocean Science Coordination and Partnership

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Abstract

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (the Ocean Decade) has the vision of "the science we need for the ocean we want." The preparatory work completed within the first three years of the Ocean Decade emphasized the co-design aspects and successfully created a large Community of Practice in the Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region (TAC) for implementation.

The Ocean Decade provides a framework for diverse actors to identify, generate and use ocean science for sustainable development, aimed to catalyze existing and new partnerships to address specific needs of citizens, industry and communities to optimise the benefits of the ocean to humans. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO leads the implementation of Decade Actions that respond to 10 Challenges in ocean health and wellbeing. The seven (7) outcomes to be achieved by 2030 through collaborative science are: A Clean Ocean, A Safe Ocean, A Predicted Ocean, A Healthy and Resilient Ocean, A Productive Ocean, An Accessible Ocean and An Inspiring and Engaging Ocean.

The Tropical Americas and Caribbean (TAC) Region is already working on improving ocean governance through the establishment of an Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM) among relevant intergovernmental bodies. This new paradigm envisions Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOP), young people, community representatives, industry and civil society participating in the governance, management and conservation of marine resources, an investment that brings measurable returns to all sectors, while minimising the impact of humans on the ocean and ensuring sustainability. The proposed TAC Ocean Decade Task Force will work with partners to unpack ocean science needs for all-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk reduction, as well as ecosystem health, alternative livelihoods and wider societal gains, and increasing wealth, especially within small island developing states (SIDS). Thus, a successful Ocean Decade in 2030 establishes a foundation of credible and relevant science that supports the Sustainable Blue Economy, ecosystem restoration, pollution reduction, fisheries conservation, and responds to the needs of states to implement global and regional treaties on the ocean.

KEYWORDS: Ocean Decade, Ocean Science, sustainable blue economy, disaster risk reduction, partnerships

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1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed in 2017 the Ocean Decade, reflecting international concern for the health and preservation of the oceans. Since then, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO has been responsible for coordinating and implementing this initiative worldwide. Thus, the Ocean Decade, which runs from 2021 to 2030, represents a comprehensive and collaborative effort by the United Nations to support all Member States. Its main purpose is to establish a global partnership for ocean research and observation, with the clear objective of achieving sustainable development and safeguarding the marine environment, as well as developing ocean science and providing data and information for informed policymaking, to ensure that the ocean functions well in support of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (IOC-UNESCO, 2020).

As already established, the UN General Assembly mandated the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), the only UN body dedicated to supporting ocean science and services at the global level, to oversee the planning and implementation of the Ocean Decade. Within the IOC structure, the Decade Coordination Unit has centralized responsibility for supporting Decade initiatives, facilitating linkages between these initiatives and resource providers, and coordinating communication and engagement efforts with key stakeholder groups, among other things. To fulfill its role, the Decade Coordination Unit is supported by distributed coordination structures hosted by various UN agencies, Governments, international or regional organizations, and other partners.

The Ocean Decade has as its cross-cutting pillars capacity building, data, information and technology development, and ocean literacy, where it seeks to reduce inequalities in ocean science capabilities between developed and developing countries, between genders and generations. The ambition of the Ocean Decade goes beyond the capacity of any single nation, stakeholder group, generation, or scientific discipline. It convenes a wide range of stakeholders to collectively align their research, investments, and initiatives around a common set of priorities, so that the outcome of their shared efforts is exponentially greater than the sum of the parts (IOC-UNESCO, 2021).

Thus, the Ocean Decade has focused its actions on responding to the Ocean Decade Challenges, which represent the highest level of the Framework for Action (Figure 1). These articulate the most immediate priorities and seek to unite the Decade of the Ocean partners in collective action to ensure that the whole of the Decade of the Ocean shapes its overall contribution to the 2030 Agenda and other global policy frameworks. During the Ocean Decade, communities of practice composed of diverse stakeholders have been convening around the Decade's Challenges through a variety of participatory mechanisms. A wide range of stakeholders translate the Challenges into relevant Actions for the Decade of the Ocean at global, regional, national and local scales.

The Decade Challenges were compiled from discussions with stakeholders during the preparation phase, including regional consultation workshops. These include 'Knowledge and Solutions Challenges' that focus on scientific research priorities and span social science, economic and political disciplines, as well as indigenous and local knowledge; 'Essential Infrastructure Challenges' that focus on the infrastructure needed to support the ambitions of the Decade of the Ocean; and 'Foundational Challenges' that focus on essential, cross-cutting elements of the enabling environment for the Ocean Decade (IOC-UNESCO, 2021) . These Challenges may evolve as problems are solved during the course of the Ocean Decade. Likewise, new Challenges may be added as issues arise. Stakeholders are involved in the process of reviewing and updating the Challenges through the participation and review mechanisms.

Figure 1. Framework for Action of the Ocean Decade. (IOC-UNESCO, 2021)

The current set of 10 Ocean Decade Challenges are as follows:

Challenge 1 (Understanding and overcoming marine pollution): Understand and map land and marine sources of pollutants and their potential impacts on human health and ocean ecosystems and develop solutions to eliminate or mitigate them.

Challenge 2 (Protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity): Understand the effects of multiple stressors on ocean ecosystems and develop solutions to monitor, protect, manage and restore ecosystems and their biodiversity under changing environmental, social and climatic conditions.

Challenge 3 (Sustainably feeding the world's population): Generate knowledge, support innovation and develop solutions to optimize the ocean's role in sustainably feeding the world's population under changing environmental, social and climatic conditions.

Challenge 4 (Develop a sustainable and equitable ocean economy): Generate knowledge, support innovation and develop solutions for the equitable and sustainable development of the ocean economy under changing environmental, social and climatic conditions.

Challenge 5 (Unlocking ocean-based solutions to climate change): Improve understanding of the ocean-climate nexus and generate knowledge and solutions to mitigate, adapt to and build resilience to climate change impacts in all geographic areas and at all scales, and improve services, including ocean, climate and weather predictions.

Challenge 6 (Increase community resilience to ocean hazards): Improve multi-hazard early warning services for all ocean and coastal-related geophysical, ecological, biological, meteorological, climatic and anthropogenic hazards, and integrate community preparedness and resilience.

Challenge 7 (Expand the global ocean observing system): Ensure a sustainable ocean observing system in all ocean basins that provides all users with accessible, timely and actionable data and information.

Challenge 8 (Create a digital representation of the ocean): Through multi-stakeholder collaboration, develop a comprehensive digital representation of the ocean, including a dynamic ocean map, that provides free and open access to explore, discover, and visualize past, current, and future ocean conditions in a way that is relevant to diverse stakeholders.

Challenge 9 (Skills, knowledge and technology for all): Ensure comprehensive capacity building and equitable access to data, information, knowledge and technology in all aspects of ocean science and for all stakeholders.

Challenge 10 (Changing humanity's relationship with the ocean): Ensure that the multiple values and services of the ocean for human well-being, culture and sustainable development are widely understood, and identify and overcome barriers to the behavioral change necessary for a radical shift in humanity's relationship with the ocean.

In response to these challenges, the Ocean Decade has been facilitating the generation of data, information and knowledge needed to move from the 'ocean we have' to the 'ocean we want'. Seven goals describe the 'ocean we want' at the end of the Ocean Decade:

- A clean ocean where sources of pollution are identified and reduced or eliminated.
- A healthy and resilient ocean where marine ecosystems are understood, protected, restored and managed.
- A productive ocean that supports a sustainable food supply and a sustainable ocean economy.
- A predictable ocean where society understands and can respond to changing ocean conditions.
- A safe ocean where life and livelihoods are protected from ocean-related hazards.
- An accessible ocean with open and equitable access to data, information, technology and innovation.
- An inspiring and attractive ocean where society understands and values the ocean in relation to human well-being and sustainable development.

It is expected that during the Ocean Decade, initiatives and/or actions will grow and flourish at local, national and regional scales according to specific contexts and priorities. Capacity building, including improved access to data and technology, increased ocean literacy, and the creation of an enabling environment that ensures broad inclusiveness, including gender, generational and geographic diversity, will be essential elements at each stage of this process. It should be noted that the Ocean Decade does not set ocean policy, but it allows for the generation of scientific capacity and knowledge that contributes directly to the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant global legal and policy frameworks.

The Ocean Decade, building on the progress already made in ocean science through September 2023, seeks to galvanize action across the board and encourage the transformation needed to bring about change in diverse areas such as geography, gender, sectors, disciplines, and generations. The Ocean Decade Actions are concrete initiatives that are being implemented globally to achieve "the science we need for the ocean we want". There are currently more than 380 of these Actions underway around the world, and it is anticipated that many more will be implemented over the next seven years. (IOC-UNESCO, 2023) involving research institutes, Governments, UN entities, intergovernmental organizations, corporations, philanthropic and corporate foundations, NGOs, ocean sports, educators, community groups, and others.

Some of these Actions are developed in Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically, IOCARIBE elaborated the Regional Actions of the Ocean Decade with the objective of addressing the priorities of the Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region (TAC) and helping the region to overcome the identified challenges, including strengthening marine scientific cooperation and improving ocean capacity building (IOCARIBE, 2021).

2. METHODS

The Ocean Decade provides a collaborative framework that invites multiple stakeholders to join in the joint planning and implementation of research geared towards identifying solutions needed to ensure the proper functioning of the oceans, in line with the 2030 Agenda. Crucial elements of this Decade are capacity building, promoting ocean literacy, and removing barriers to full diversity in terms of gender, generation, and geographic location (IOC-UNESCO, 2021)

Accordingly, in 2020 the virtual workshop "UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030: Western Tropical Atlantic Regional (WTA) Workshop" was developed and the Regional Planning Group was established under the coordination of IOCARIBE (IOCARIBE, 2020). This group had the function of promoting and coordinating strategic alliances in the TAC Region, covering the Western Tropical Atlantic and Eastern Tropical Pacific. To achieve the objectives of the Decade, seven Working Groups were set up. These groups were charged with fostering multidisciplinary and inclusive partnerships to achieve each of the Decade's outcomes.

In 2021, as part of the preparation of the Implementation Plan for the Ocean Decade, an ECOPs Group was established. Surveys and consultations were used to gather information on priority areas for Decade activities and capacity needs. At the first UNESCO-IOC global planning meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, a self-organized group of ECOPs met to discuss their vision for the future engagement of ECOPs in the Ocean Decade and beyond. These platforms and other Decade of Ocean's actions, projects and programs offer practical opportunities to generate knowledge to inform a sustainable ocean economy (IOC-UNESCO, 2021).

During that year, seven online workshops were organized between July and October 2021, with more than 150 registered participants in each one, with speakers and participants from IOCARIBE SIDS and ECOPs in the region (IOCARIBE, 2021). These workshops aimed to review knowledge gaps and barriers, identify priority areas and capacity development needs, and catalyze a co-design process to find transformative ocean science solutions. Subsequently, the IOC adopted the Decade of Oceans Implementation Plan, which seeks to facilitate the transition from an "ocean we have" to an "ocean we want", aligning with the vision of the 2030 Agenda.

In December 2021, IOCARIBE, together with UN agencies and sponsored by the Governments of Barbados and Colombia, convened the Regional Conference to Launch the Ocean Decade. This conference marked the beginning of regional efforts to implement the Decade's Actions. During the Launching Conference, the proposed transformative solutions were reviewed and evaluated. In addition, the incipient regional commitment to building partnerships for the Regional Actions of the Ocean Decade was highlighted, mobilizing contributions and expressions of interest from various stakeholders (IOCARIBE, 2021).

The call to action at the Conference urged member states, partners and stakeholders to engage and motivate other actors to enhance partnerships to co-create and deliver transformative solutions to global challenges. The need to strengthen governance and coordination in the region was also emphasized. The Conference also highlighted the importance of supporting the

formation of National Committees for the Ocean Decade to mobilize collaboration at local and national levels to co-design and coordinate actions at local, national and regional levels.

The National Committees of the Ocean Decade encourage the participation of each country at this crucial stage. Their approach is to mobilize the "ocean community" at the national level, including all actors involved in ocean science and knowledge, from producers to users. These committees have a unique mandate and scope, adapting to the specific needs of each nation. However, they share essential functions, such as disseminating and understanding the Ocean Decade, facilitating the participation of diverse stakeholder groups, including those not traditionally linked to the scientific community. In addition, they promote the collaborative design of Decade Actions in response to the Calls for Proposals, improving international networking and coordinating national actors (IOC-UNESCO, 2021).

Likewise, within the framework of the Ocean Decade, the IOC has been promoting ecosystem-based management through Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). This includes the establishment of Regional MSP Forums, such as the Regional MSP Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean, developed in December 2022. This effort marks the beginning of a regional dialogue process on MSP and the building of a regional network and platform for MSP practitioners, focusing on improving marine protection and restoration, as well as increasing awareness of MSP in the region.

3. RESULTS

During the first quarter of 2020, the work of IOCARIBE for the implementation of the Ocean Decade began and the results were immediate, in April 2020 the virtual workshop "UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030: Western Tropical Atlantic Regional (WTA) Workshop" was held, with the online participation of 368 people, including organizers and participants, who also represented different sectors, mainly national institutions and academia. From Table 1 below, it is noted that 311 persons connected from 40 nations in the region and 57 from states in the rest of the world (IOCARIBE, 2020).

Table 1. Countries from which you connected to the WTA Workshop (IOCARIBE, 2020)

Country	Number of participants	Country	Number of participants
Colombia	59	Venezuela	3
Mexico	49	Guadeloupe	3
United States	33	Guatemala	2
Brazil	31	Chile	2
Trinidad and Tobago	13	Bahamas	2
France	12	Aruba	2
Jamaica	9	British Virgin Islands	2
Panama	9	Saint Lucia	2
Costa Rica	9	Antigua & Barbuda	2
United Kingdom	9	Honduras	1
Puerto Rico	7	Dominican Republic	1

At this workshop, the WTA Regional Planning Group (RPG) began to consolidate, and each of the regional leaders of the seven goals of the Ocean Decade identified the problems, concerns, recommendations and solutions raised by the participants. Table 2 below lists the major challenges and actions planned for the WTA region (IOCARIBE, 2020)

Table 2. Grand challenges and actions identified at the WTA Workshop (IOCARIBE, 2020)

Country	Number of participants	Country	Number of participants
Colombia	59	Venezuela	3
Mexico	49	Guadeloupe	3
United States	33	Guatemala	2
Brazil	31	Chile	2
Trinidad and Tobago	13	Bahamas	2
France	12	Aruba	2
Jamaica	9	British Virgin Islands	2
Panama	9	Saint Lucia	2
Costa Rica	9	Antigua & Barbuda	2
United Kingdom	9	Honduras	1
Puerto Rico	7	Dominican Republic	1
Canada	7	Grenada	1
Belize	5	Saint Kitts And Nevis	1
Argentina	5	Haiti	1
Peru	4	El Salvador	1
Netherlands	4	Uruguay	1
Nicaragua	4	Suriname	1
Barbados	4	Cuba	1
Martinique (France)	4	The Bahamas	1
Ecuador	3	Guyana	1
Other Nations		57	
Total		**311**	

In November 2020, the workshop "Co-designing the Ocean Science we need for the Western Tropical Atlantic" was held, which served to advance the preparation process and marked the beginning of coordination for the execution of the seven co-design workshops in the region.

Table 3. Ocean Decade co-design webinar series in WTA region (IOCARIBE, 2021)

Decade outcomes	Grand challenge	Grand action
A Clean Ocean	Identify, quantify, and reduce marine pollution sources.	Enhance understanding through data collection, aiming for sustainable coastal and marine resource use.
A Healthy and Resilient Ocean	Map and protect marine ecosystems, considering climate change impacts.	Build capacity to manage marine stressors and protect marine/coastal ecosystems at a regional scale.
A Predicted Ocean	Understand and forecast ocean conditions for societal benefit.	Produce, integrate, and communicate high-quality ocean data and services to fulfill sustainable development goals.
A Safe Ocean	Addressing escalating ocean-related hazards and their impacts on life and livelihoods.	Develop a regional multi-hazard ocean data and forecast system, empowering policy and decision-making for protection.
A Sustainably Harvested and Productive Ocean	Ensure sustainable management of fisheries and human activities.	Implement a multidisciplinary research approach involving various stakeholders for sustainable fisheries and marine ecosystem services.
A Transparent and Accessible Ocean	Improve access to ocean data, information, and technologies for all stakeholders.	Develop an information access system for data sharing and interoperability, tailored to stakeholder needs.
A Society Engaged in Ocean Research and Services	Involve stakeholders in ocean research and services for sustainable development.	Implement a coordinated strategy to address regional capacity development challenges and enhance communication for impactful outcomes.

The convening of the Workshops allowed the identification of essential recommendations to address the goals of the Ocean Decade in the WTA region. Accordingly, in order to achieve a clean ocean, it was emphasized that the sources of pollution must be identified and the capacity for analysis must be improved, in addition to promoting education and trans-disciplinarity. Likewise, to achieve a healthy and resilient ocean, the importance of innovative approaches based on nature and constant monitoring of marine ecosystems was emphasized. In relation to effective ocean forecasting, it was established that there is a need for accurate tools and strong international collaboration.

The safe ocean workshop identified the requirement for multidimensional approaches to risk management and improved data collection and sharing. Similarly, participants at the productive and sustainable ocean workshop called for collaboration, effective spatial planning, and long-term commitment from funding agencies are needed. Ultimately, for a transparent and accessible ocean, the strengthening of marine observing systems and open access to data and technologies were advocated. In this context, capacity building, standardization of methods and collaboration between Governments, industry and science were noted as key elements in this process (IOCARIBE, 2021).

At the end of the series of seven webinars, the initial regional scope for the Western Tropical Atlantic was extended to the Eastern Tropical Pacific to merge into the Tropical Atlantic and Caribbean Region, encompassing both basins, for coherence, physical and ecosystemic and geopolitical similarity, giving rise to the Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region (TAC). Accordingly, the co-design phase ended with the "Tropical Americas and Caribbean Region: Regional Kick-off Conference", which was convened by IOCARIBE

with UN agencies and partners, under the auspices of the Governments of Barbados and Colombia, marked the launching of the Ocean Decade in the TAC region (IOCARIBE, 2021).

This Conference generated a call to action **"Accelerating science-based solutions to solve sustainable ocean development challenges in the TAC region"**. Stakeholders were urged to:

- Protect, conserve and restore ocean ecosystems to improve the resilience of regional and global communities that depend on them;
- Engage and inspire stakeholders to develop and enhance partnerships for the co-design and co-delivery of transformative solutions to the critical sustainable development challenges of the decade, leaving no one behind in the design, implementation and access to benefits;
- Identify programs, projects, actions that include contributions to the Decade's solutions in the region;
- Support the creation of National Committees for the Ocean Decade to mobilize local and national collaboration to co-design and coordinate local, national and regional actions; and
- Participate through events, publications, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, offers of training opportunities, or contributions both financial and in-kind to support the development of actions in the Decade.

With respect to the Decade National Committees (NDC), 37 countries have so far established them, and many others are in the process of doing so. The Decade Coordination Unit at UNESCO/IOC is actively supporting this process, providing opportunities for collaboration and sharing of experiences among the established committees and various coordination structures for the Ocean Decade. In the Americas region, NDCs have been established in Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, the United States and Canada (IOC-UNESCO, 2023)

In 2022 IOCARIBE developed Regional Actions for the Ocean Decade to address priorities of the TAC region and overcome the challenges identified. These Actions were approved as Decade Actions and are being implemented by partner organizations, coordinated by IOCARIBE. In addition, they seek to integrate existing projects supported by the Decade, taking advantage of synergies and enhancing their impact for the benefit of the region. The following actions were approved by the Coordinating Office of the Ocean Decade:

Project No. 133.2 Gain knowledge to respond to multiple stressors
Project No. 134.2 TAC Pollutants Observatory
Project No. 135.2 TAC Ocean Observing and Forecasting System
Project No. 136.2 Enhancing capacity development in the TAC Region
Project No. 137.2 Ocean Literacy in the TAC Region
Project No. 138.2 Integrating Coastal Hazard Warning Systems for TAC
Project No. 140.2 MACHC-IOCARIBE Seabed 2030 Project

Further, in June 2022, the IOC Executive Council invited IOCARIBE to consider acting as the Decade Coordination Office for the implementation of regional actions and to determine the powers and resources needed to strengthen the regional secretariat (IOC-UNESCO, 2022) At the Seventeenth Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE-XVII), and with the purpose of taking advantage of the above-mentioned achievements and strengthening the mandate, Member States approved the transformation of the Regional Planning Group into the recently formed TAC Ocean Decade Task Force; and to establish a Decade Coordination office for the TAC within the IOCARIBE Sub-commission, an initiative that is currently underway, with all interested groups in the region.

The Ocean Decade Task Force membership embodies the inclusion and co-design aspects of the process. Representatives from youth, the regional financial, petroleum, tourism and fisheries sectors, academia, Governments, non-Governmental organizations and coastal communities are all included, and will have the opportunity to participate in setting policy at the regional level, as well as influencing national ocean policy. Accordingly, the Ocean Coordination Mechanism (OCM), originally established on an interim basis to reduce fragmentation of ocean governance regionally, opened for signature on October 06, 2023, at the high-level ministerial session of the UNEP Cartagena Convention Conference of Parties. Nine intergovernmental organizations are expected to sign, having played an active role in the interim mechanism. It is proposed that these IGOs, focused on ocean management, fisheries, policy and regional integration, economic and social development and ocean research, join the core membership of the TAC Ocean Decade Task Force, achieving two of the OCM's main objectives: "Facilitating programmatic coordination of ocean governance and support the monitoring of progress with ocean sustainability instruments, goals and commitments" (CLME+ Steering Committee, 2021)

4. DISCUSSION

So far, significant progress has been made in important areas such as co-design, inclusion, sustainability and international collaboration. The actions generated in response to the challenges and the search for the ocean we want by 2030, seek to generate and implement environmental policies at regional, national and local levels that allow the implementation of activities in the ocean and coastal areas, without affecting the enjoyment of future generations and mitigating all those human impacts on these ecosystems; the promotion of education and participation of various sectors, which together indicate a commitment to a more sustainable and equitable future.

This co-design of the ocean we want has allowed for the inclusion of all the states of the TAC region and various sectors in this initiative - an inclusion essential to address global challenges from the local and regional level, as it ensures that voices and perspectives of different communities and regions are represented and considered in decision making. Likewise, the incorporation of youth has been fundamental to the process, given that actively involving them in the planning and execution of initiatives will ensure that those who will lead these issues at the end of the Ocean Decade are sufficiently trained and committed, guaranteeing a truly sustainable legacy.

All the activities developed, and the results obtained from their execution are also notable advances. The world is turning its attention to the care and responsible and sustainable use of the environment and in the specific case of the ocean. There are now stronger alliances that mobilize and multiply the commitments of financial and in-kind resources for the Decade, which allows for the shared development of solutions. However, it is important to continue to evaluate and adjust strategies to achieve the 2030 goals. It is of utmost importance to maintain flexibility and be willing to adapt as new challenges and opportunities arise.

In this sense, it is essential to continue establishing clear and realistic strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, since a sustainable development of the ocean does not only imply achieving the targets set out in Goal 14, but rather, it will be the product of jointly achieving all the targets set out in the 2023 Agenda. This means strengthening international cooperation, intensifying efforts to address key issues such as climate change and inequality and fostering innovation and technology for sustainable solutions.

There are many questions about what happens after 2030. The 10 Challenges of the Ocean Decade will not be realized during a single decade. However, it is expected that new regional norms will be set: governance and co-design, inclusive ocean science and services, as well as targeted capacity development to fill gaps; the ocean will be demystified through available, accessible and appropriate ocean data and information, as well as transmitted to end-users through skilled ocean science communication; and the process of succession planning for ocean governance through early involvement of youth in ocean policy setting is accepted. IOCARIBE, with the cooperation of the OCM members, intends to maintain a longer-term focus on the existing Ocean Decade challenges, and adapt to address new and evolving challenges also. This means strengthening strategies and setting new long-term goals for an even more sustainable and equitable future. Global cooperation will remain essential to address the complex challenges we face to ensure a future for generations to come.

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