

STATEMENT BY the [Scientific and Technological Community \(STC\) Major Group](#)

Delivered by Craig Starger as part of the International Council for Science (STC Major Group)
Oceans Conference Preparatory Meeting, New York, February 15-16 2017

Check against delivery

Thank you very much Mr(s). Co-Facilitators and Distinguished Delegates:

I am speaking on behalf of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group. My name is Craig Starger, representing Future Earth and the International Council for Science.

As science fiction writer Arthur C. Clark said, "How inappropriate to call this planet Earth when it is clearly Ocean." Our oceans cover more than two thirds of the Earth's surface and contain 97 percent of the Earth's water. Life began in the seas more than 3 billion years ago, while land dwellers only appeared 400 million years ago, a blink of an eye in geological terms. Human wellbeing is inextricably linked with the wellbeing of the ocean. More than 1 billion people will be vulnerable to malnutrition and food insecurity due to the impact of ocean temperature rise.

Yet the rate of change in ocean health is accelerating, putting at risk the many services that the Ocean provides to humankind, from food source to carbon sink. Just this week, researchers published new findings that even life in the deepest ocean trench, previously assumed to be pristine environments, has been contaminated by industrial chemicals such as PCBs.

Issues such as sustainable fisheries, plastics in the ocean, ocean acidification and how economic drivers affect ocean ecosystems need to be addressed through knowledge and evidence, generated in partnership with all of society. We need to find new ways to speak truth and evidence to people, and to power. These partnerships have never been more vital in a world where deliberative enquiry and verifiable facts are increasingly questioned. More than ever, scientists need to work directly with people on the future of our oceans.

The Scientific and Technological Community pledges to work at all levels – global, national and local – to promote ocean sustainability in support of SDG 14. A key initiative is a multi-stakeholder platform led by the research programme Future Earth, being launched at the Oceans conference in June. The "Ocean Knowledge for Action Network" seeks to stimulate and accelerate new partnerships for knowledge generation and implementation of SDG14. The network benefits from the rich and relevant work of the large number of existing marine research projects under the umbrella of international science bodies such as the International Council for Science (ICSU), the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR), the World Climate Research Programme, IOC-UNESCO, and Future Earth. We need your help now to build partnerships to co-develop a roadmap for the future of the oceans.

Scientific knowledge can admittedly be slow in the making, and the challenges are urgent. What we already know now can effectively be put to task. The network will roll out an integrated research agenda to catalyze and focus national ocean research and innovation networks. Our goal is to increase knowledge and research capacity in tandem with critical users of that knowledge.

So let's get to work now. Knowledge, partnerships, and international cooperation are the keys to a sustainable future for our oceans. Let's unlock the power of action-oriented research to underwrite the future health of our oceans.