



The International Business Alliance  
for Corporate Ocean Responsibility

## News Release

# PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP ON OCEAN, CLIMATE AND SDGS FOR ISLANDS AT COP 25, MADRID

## WOC Partners with Cape Verde and Other Island Countries on Advancing Adaptation and Private Sector Engagement for a Climate Resilient Blue Economy in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

13 December 2019

At the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP 25) for the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Ocean Council (WOC) worked with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to organize an official Side Event on the need for islands to become more resilient and adapted to climate variability and changes and the opportunities of the Blue Economy.

Speaking at the event, the World Ocean Council (WOC) CEO highlighted the importance and opportunity for engaging the ocean business and investment community and the role of the WOC in working with island countries in:

1. Improving early warning and disaster preparedness by increasing the ocean weather and climate data collected via commercial vessels and platforms (WOC "SMART Ocean-SMART Industries" program)
2. Ensuring adaptation of port/coastal infrastructure to extreme weather events and sea level rise by engaging the ocean business, port development and investment communities
3. Advancing the Blue Economy by ensuring ocean business and investment community involvement in island country efforts to develop Blue Economy strategies and conferences

At this special COP 25 Side Event, a high-level panel addressed the sustainable Blue Economy needs, opportunities and progress of the Africa SIDS:

- HE Alexandre Monteiro, Minister of Industry, Trade and Energy, Cabo Verde
- HE Wallace Cosgrow, Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Seychelles
- HE Jose Cardoso Cassandra, President, Principe Island, São Tome & Principe
- HE Paulo Silva, Ambassador of Guinea Bissau, Kingdom of Spain

International organization representatives opened and closed the event with keynotes:

- Amb. Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary General Special Envoy on the Ocean
- Prof. Petteri Taalas, Secretary General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

- Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Miguel Clüsener-Godt, Director, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, UNESCO

The final panel addressed adaption and private sector engagement in ensuring a climate resilient Blue Economy for islands:

- Godfrey Bahigwa, Director, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission
- Anthony Nyong, Director, Climate Change and Green Growth, African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Margarita Astralaga, Director, Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Paul Holthus, CEO, World Ocean Council (WOC)

Governments, development partners, NGOs, civil society and the private sector have been working together to develop climate adaptation and mitigation strategies to reduce risks in these countries. Ports and coastal infrastructure are an economic lifeline for SIDS. Ensuring the resilience, operability and sustainability of this infrastructure in the face of climate change is essential to the SIDS development. Adaption finance, public-private partnerships and other investments are critical to building greater resilience to hydro-meteorological hazards and contributing to sustainable development of small island countries.

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## Recent and Upcoming WOC Outreach and Engagement

2-13 December, MADRID

**U.N. Climate Change Convention – Conference of the Parties (COP) 25** (Participant)

10 December, PARIS

**GEF Marine Plastics Final Project Meeting** (Participant)

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### World Ocean Council (WOC) – The Global Blue Economy Business Organization

*The WOC is the international, cross-sectoral alliance for private sector leadership, collaboration and action on ocean sustainability, stewardship and science. Companies from a range of industries worldwide are distinguishing themselves as leaders in “Corporate Ocean Responsibility”, including: shipping, oil and gas, tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, mining, renewable energy, ocean technology and investment.*

WOC Members are listed [here](#), a part of the WOC Network of 35,000+ ocean industry stakeholders around the world. The WOC is a registered not-for-profit organization in the US, UK and France.

**Contact email:** [info@oceanCouncil.org](mailto:info@oceanCouncil.org) **Web:** [www.oceanCouncil.org](http://www.oceanCouncil.org)

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