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联合国教育、
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**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General of UNESCO,**

on the occasion of World Oceans Day

Clean Our Ocean

8 June 2018

The ocean is home to the majority of species living on our planet. It provides more than 60% of “ecosystem services” that allow us to live, starting with the production of most of our oxygen, and climate regulation: in the last half century, the ocean has absorbed 93% of the excess heat linked to the increase in the greenhouse effect.

The ocean is a prerequisite for the possibility of life on Earth. It is endangered, however, by the overexploitation of resources, pollution and increasing CO₂ absorption. Global warming, acidification, dead zones, harmful algal blooms and ecosystem degradation are phenomena that reflect the impact of human activities on the ocean.

This year, the discovery in the Gulf of Oman of a new “dead zone” which is larger than Scotland and still growing, highlighted the phenomenon that occurs when marine life becomes asphyxiated in ocean areas with drastically low levels of oxygen. This plight comes on top of overfishing and pollution, particularly that caused by plastic waste, which is dumped into the ocean at the rate of one lorry load per minute, entering our food web. This has major implications for food security. Part of this waste is concentrated in ocean areas called gyres, caused by circulating ocean currents.

There are, nonetheless, solutions to combat such disasters. In places where destruction has ceased, life has returned. The marine environment can demonstrate resilience if we allow it to recover from anthropogenic stresses through good management of its ecosystems.

With the aim of encouraging international scientific collaboration to address such challenges, on 5 December 2017, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) has been mandated to coordinate its preparation and implementation.

In line with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goal on the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, this Decade will be a unique opportunity to mobilize all stakeholders around a common agenda of research and technological innovation to gain a better understanding of the factors affecting this resource, their consequences, and to provide the best responses.

This goal requires up to the mark investment. According to the *Global Ocean Science Report* published in 2017, it currently represents only 4.5% of the public funding allocated to natural sciences at the global level. We cannot sit back and allow this situation to continue.

No country alone is capable of measuring changes in the ocean, nor of cleaning and protecting it. Through international cooperation, technology transfer and knowledge sharing, we can succeed in developing environmentally friendly policies that promote sustainable growth based on the ocean.

On this World Oceans Day, UNESCO invites Member States, the scientific community, civil society and the private sector to join forces, following the maxim of the Japanese writer Ryūnosuke Akutagawa: “Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.”