

Ocean20 South Africa Newsletter

25 APRIL, 2025

OCEAN20 SOUTH AFRICA LAUNCH

On 2 April 2025, South Africa officially launched the Ocean20 initiative on the side lines of the 14th ICSHMO Conference in Cape Town. This groundbreaking event, held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, brought together key ocean stakeholders from across the globe. The launch marks South Africa's commitment to an inclusive and sustainable future for the oceans, aligning with the G20's focus on ocean governance, climate resilience, and the blue economy.



VOICES OF LEADERSHIP

Key figures delivered powerful statements reinforcing the **Ocean20** vision:

- **Dr. Angus Paterson**, NRF Deputy CEO, opened the event with a strong message about placing sustainability and societal needs at the heart of ocean science.
- **Minister Blade Nzimande**, via video, reiterated South Africa's commitment to ocean science and **South-South cooperation** with **Brazil** under the G20. He stressed the importance of ocean literacy and regional partnerships to ensure sustainable marine resource use.
- **Mr. Ashley Johnson** from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) highlighted the ocean's role in achieving the **United Nations Standard Development Goals** and the country's potential as a maritime leader.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT: BRIDGING CONTINENTS AND IDEAS



Mr. Erik Giercksky, Head of Oceans at the **UN Global Compact**, emphasized the role of business in advancing the blue economy and the need for science-based standards to guide sustainable investment.

From Brazil, **Dr. Janice Trott-Duhá** shared insights from their 2024 Ocean20 experience, reflecting on Brazil's **participatory dialogues** and formally handing over the Ocean20 baton to South Africa. Her message reinforced the global nature of ocean challenges—and solutions.

PANEL DISCUSSION: DEFINING OCEAN ACTIONS

The panel discussion, chaired by **Dr. Gilbert Siko**, brought together voices from **government, youth, civil society, academia, and business** to explore how Ocean20 can translate into tangible outcomes. Youth representative Yanga Malotana highlighted the urgent need to link ocean opportunities, such as offshore wind energy, to real employment for rural and non-graduate youth. She stressed that while climate change may not top youth priorities, it directly affects the issues they care about—jobs, education, and safety.

The audience discussion also emphasized the importance of **empowering municipalities** to implement ocean-related projects and policies. Odwa Mtati from SAIMI spoke on unlocking value chains in the oceans economy to support small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), especially those that are Black- and women-owned. His introduction of the *Dive In* platform showcased how early exposure to ocean careers can drive inclusion and growth. Panelists and attendees were united in calling for cross-sector collaboration and a shift from discussion to implementation, positioning South Africa as a proactive leader in the global blue economy.

OCEAN20 SA FRAMEWORK UNVEILED

Dr. Tammy Morris, Ocean20 SA Lead Coordinator from SAEON, introduced South Africa's vision and framework for Ocean Actions in 2025. The initiative will:

- Use a quadruple helix model involving academia, business, civil society, and government.
- Focus on targeted, practical, and inclusive interventions, such as cost-effective coastal technologies, blue finance, and citizen science.
- Align with global frameworks (e.g., SDGs, BBNJ Treaty, UN Decade of Ocean Science).
- Extend efforts across Africa, in partnership with the African Union.

CALL TO ACTION: THE OCEAN MUST HAVE A VOICE

Prof. Juliet Hermes, Ocean20 Co-Lead and SAEON Egagasini Node Manager, closed the event with a powerful reminder: the ocean must not only be discussed but actively represented in decision-making spaces. She echoed the values of South Africa's G20 Presidency—**solidarity, equality, and sustainability**—urging all stakeholders to move from dialogue to action. Juliet called on attendees to continue shaping the Ocean20 roadmap through collaboration, submissions, and commitment to meaningful change.

Join the Ocean20 Current

The momentum behind Ocean20 is building — driven by collaboration, innovation, and shared responsibility. As South Africa leads this effort through its G20 Presidency, all sectors are invited to contribute meaningfully. Whether you're advancing research, investing in ocean-based solutions, or empowering youth — there is space at the table for you.

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Scan the QR code to share your **Ocean Actions** and be part of the Ocean20 conversation
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