



COP28  
UAE



# The 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough

**Mobilizing State and non-State actors worldwide to accelerate a comprehensive, coordinated global approach to seagrass conservation at an impactful scale, aligned with international climate-related commitments**



## Importance of Seagrass

Seagrasses are among the world's most productive natural habitats, providing a plethora of highly valuable ecosystem services. They support biodiversity with food and habitat; improve water quality by filtering, cycling and storing nutrients and pollutants; protect coastal areas by attenuating wave energy; and support marine-based economic sectors, such as tourism and fisheries, including by providing critical nursery habitat to 20% of the world's biggest fisheries.



## Climate Change and Nature-Based Solutions

Seagrasses play a key role in climate change **mitigation** through their highly effective carbon sequestration and storage capacity (whilst covering only 0.1% of the ocean floor, seagrass sediments store up to 18% of oceanic carbon, constituting one of the planet's most efficient carbon stores), and in climate change **adaptation** through protection against sea-level rise and flooding. Seagrasses also buffer ocean acidification, thus contributing to the resilience of vulnerable species and ecosystems, such as coral reefs.

Building on the UNFCCC's Ocean Breakthroughs, the 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough provides a framework for State and non-State actors to work together towards the shared ambition of securing the conservation of 150,000 km<sup>2</sup> of seagrass globally by mobilizing USD 1.2 billion by 2030\* through collective action on:

Halting seagrass loss at a global level



Facilitating recovery of degraded seagrass



Doubling protection of seagrasses globally



Ensuring sustainable long-term financing



## Ecosystem Services under Threat

Despite their importance, seagrasses continue to be undervalued, under-protected and overlooked in decision-making. They have been declining globally since the 1930s, and around 7% of this habitat is lost globally every year. Only 26% of globally recorded seagrass meadows currently fall within Marine Protected Areas, compared with 40% of coral reefs and 43% of mangroves.

\*Ambition shall be revisited in the first strategic planning workshop of the 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough in 2024

## 10 Guiding Principles\* of the 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough

The initiative's guiding principles embody an unwavering dedication to preserving, restoring and sustainably managing seagrass ecosystems:

- 1 **Ecosystem Stewardship**
- 2 **Science-Based Decision-Making**
- 3 **Inclusivity and Collaboration**
- 4 **Holistic Sustainability**
- 5 **Adaptability**
- 6 **Global Action with Local Solutions**
- 7 **Empowerment and Capacity-Building**
- 8 **Transparency and Accountability**
- 9 **Innovation**
- 10 **Resilience Beyond 2030**



### How to Join the 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough

**• Commit to the 10 Guiding Principles**

These serve as guardrails to ensure meaningful and successful interventions

**• Commit to action**

Pledge to an *entry action* that propels the Breakthrough's strategy:

- Setting and achieving ambitious, yet attainable conservation goals
- Joining the proactive coalition through science-based projects aligned with the Breakthrough's objectives
- Creating the enabling conditions for seagrass conservation to take place
- Catalyzing funding, where possible, to attract capital for seagrass conservation

**For more information, please contact the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi**

- Rouba Abou-Atieh, Executive Coordinator, rouba.abouatieh@un.org
- Yasmeen Tel Wala, Programme Management Officer, yasmeen.telwala@un.org
- Lauren Lopes, Associate Programme Management Officer, lauren.lloydlopes@un.org



\*May be revisited in the first strategic planning workshop of the 2030 Seagrass Breakthrough in 2024