

# Peace Boat US Submission to the UNFCCC

## **COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner: Oceans and Fossil Fuels**

Peace Boat US welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap, with a focus on the interconnections between fossil fuels, ocean health and a just transition. The ocean is central to climate regulation, biodiversity and livelihoods, yet it is increasingly degraded by fossil fuel extraction, consumption and associated industries. A just, orderly and equitable transition away from fossil fuels is therefore essential to protect marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

Despite growing recognition of ocean-climate linkages, several structural barriers continue to delay progress. A central challenge is the absence of global supply-side governance for fossil fuels. Existing climate agreements focus primarily on emissions rather than extraction, allowing continued expansion of coal, oil and gas, including offshore drilling. This locks in future emissions and accelerates ocean warming, acidification and sea-level rise, with severe consequences for coral reefs, fisheries and coastal ecosystems.

Fossil fuel activities also directly pollute the ocean. Oil spills, methane leakage, shipping emissions and petrochemical waste all degrade marine environments. Plastics, produced primarily from oil and gas, further drive fossil fuel demand while contributing millions of tonnes of marine litter and microplastics each year. These pollutants harm biodiversity, disrupt food systems and weaken the ocean's capacity to regulate climate.

Emerging risks such as deep-sea mining highlight the danger of replicating extractive models in new frontiers. Driven in part by demand for minerals for energy technologies, deep-sea mining threatens fragile and poorly understood ecosystems. Without precautionary governance, it risks compounding ocean degradation rather than supporting a sustainable transition.

These environmental impacts are not evenly distributed. Coastal communities, Indigenous Peoples and small island developing states face disproportionate risks from sea-level rise, erosion, ecosystem loss and declining fisheries, despite contributing least to global emissions. At the same time, many fossil fuel dependent economies lack the financial resources to invest in renewable energy, ocean protection and adaptation, with high debt burdens and insufficient climate finance further constraining action.

Addressing these barriers requires coordinated international solutions that integrate climate action, ocean protection and justice. A Fossil Fuel Treaty would provide a critical framework for managing a fair and planned phase-out of fossil fuel production. By committing states to end new exploration and licensing, including offshore extraction, and establishing science-based timelines for declining existing production, such a treaty would directly address the drivers of ocean warming and acidification. It could also include mechanisms for cooperation, transparency and accountability, as well as provisions for environmental remediation and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems. By reducing competition over offshore

resources and associated environmental harm, a Fossil Fuel Treaty can also contribute to more cooperative and peaceful ocean governance.

To ensure that the transition is equitable, a Global Just Transition Fund is essential. This fund should provide predictable financial support to fossil fuel dependent developing countries, workers and communities, enabling renewable energy deployment, including in maritime sectors, as well as economic diversification, coastal resilience and ecosystem restoration. Funding could be mobilised through public contributions, fossil fuel levies, windfall taxes and the reallocation of a portion of global military spending, which exceeds USD 2.7 trillion annually. Even limited reallocation could significantly expand resources for ocean protection, climate adaptation and sustainable livelihoods in coastal and island regions.

Education and public engagement are also critical enablers of a just transition. Strengthening ocean literacy can build awareness of the links between fossil fuels, climate change, plastics and ocean degradation, while highlighting solutions based on renewable energy and sustainable ocean management. Peace Boat US's youth programmes provide a strong example of effective practice. Initiatives such as the Youth for SDGs programme have engaged young people from diverse regions in experiential learning at sea, combining education on climate change, ocean conservation and sustainable development with intercultural dialogue and capacity building. Participants gain first-hand understanding of ocean impacts, develop leadership skills and engage directly with experts, policymakers and affected communities. These programmes have demonstrated measurable success in empowering youth as advocates for climate action and ocean protection, and in fostering long-term engagement and behavioural change.

Scaling up such initiatives across formal and informal education systems can strengthen public support for transition policies, enable informed decision-making and build the social foundations for transformative change.

A just, orderly and equitable transition must reflect diverse national and regional realities. Small island developing states and coastal communities require targeted support for adaptation, resilience and sustainable development. Policies must be grounded in human rights, ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and frontline communities, and respect traditional knowledge systems. Equitable access to finance, technology and decision-making is essential.

In conclusion, ocean health and climate stability are inseparable from the transition away from fossil fuels. Continued fossil fuel expansion threatens marine ecosystems, undermines livelihoods and exacerbates inequality. A Fossil Fuel Treaty, a Global Just Transition Fund and strengthened education and public engagement, including proven youth-led ocean literacy initiatives, together provide a pathway to align climate action with ocean protection and justice. Peace Boat US stands ready to support the COP30 Presidency Roadmap and contribute its experience in education, advocacy and international cooperation to advance a just, orderly and equitable transition.