

SCALING 30X30 MARINE PLANNING

CBD COP 16 Side Event

This morning, the side event “**Scaling 30x30 Marine Planning Through Subregional Cooperation**” took place within the framework of COP16, held in Cali, Colombia.

This event was made possible through collaboration with the governments of the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, and Jamaica, alongside the technical secretariats of the **Caribbean Biodiversity Corridor (CBC)** and the **Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR)**, with support from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the **Global MPA Network**, **The Ocean Foundation**, the **Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF)**, and the **Fundación Pacífico**.

The session, moderated and led by Pamela Castillo, Director of the WCS 30x30 Marine Program, addressed the urgency of innovative mechanisms and partnerships to accelerate progress towards the ambitious goal of protecting 30% of oceanic areas by 2030. Achieving the 30x30 target requires prioritizing areas essential for biodiversity, ecosystem functionality, and critical marine services. Through networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective conservation measures, platforms like CMAR and CBC are well-positioned to lead the advancement of marine spatial planning at a regional scale to meet these crucial goals.

Experts who participated in the session included Sue Lieberman, Vice President of International Policy at WCS; Kendall Jones, Conservation Planning Expert at WCS; Puri Canals of Global MPA Managers; José Julio Casas, Interim Technical Secretary of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor; José Ramón Reyes, Vice Minister of Coastal and Marine Resources at the Dominican Republic’s Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources; Nicasio Viña, Executive Secretary of CBC; Anthony McKenzie, Director of Planning at Jamaica’s National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA); Michelet Louis, Director of Biodiversity at Haiti’s Ministry of Environment; and Adianez Taboada Zamora, Vice Minister at Cuba’s Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment.

Lessons learned from the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Conservation Corridor (CMAR) offered a roadmap at COP16 for other regions like the Caribbean. Over its 20-year trajectory, CMAR has achieved significant marine conservation milestones within its four member countries—Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panama—who have collectively protected 30% of their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). The CBC-participating countries, including the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico, are now in a position to benefit from CMAR’s expertise in political collaboration, technical support, and access to financing.

The event also highlighted the challenges the region faces in advancing marine conservation dialogues, emphasizing the critical need for subregional coordination and cooperation as a mechanism without which it would be impossible to conserve our oceans at the pace the planet requires and achieve the global conservation goals established by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

The need for collaboration to extend through international support was also underscored, along with the political commitment of CBC member governments, who emphasized the value of this platform as a vehicle to advance coordinated planning and secure the necessary funding to drive progress towards full achievement of Target 3 of the GBF.

Undoubtedly, this represents a formidable challenge for the CBC and the Caribbean region, who can count on the continued support of key allies like the CBF and WCS.