

## OCEANO AZUL FOUNDATION, PORTUGUESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND UN-DESA LAUNCH FIRST CAPACITY AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME FOR OCEAN GOVERNANCE

- **The new programme was announced during the 4th International Conference On Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Antigua and Barbuda.**
- **Its aim is to develop a new generation of leaders, particularly from developing countries, equipped to address the challenges facing the ocean at a global level.**
- **The first session will take place between October 14 and 18 in Lisbon.**

Together with the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), Oceano Azul Foundation will launch a fellowship and capacity programme designed to cultivate a new generation of leaders from developing countries, equipped to address the challenges facing the ocean. The programme was announced during the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Antigua and Barbuda.

This initiative, called ***UN – Portugal: Capacity Building Programme on Sustainable Ocean Governance and Blue Economy***, arose from the need to address the growing environmental challenges at global level that affect the health of the ocean. Its objective is to promote and facilitate access to resources, enabling countries, particularly SIDS and other developing countries, to develop sustainable ocean governance.

Specifically, this capacity-building programme will support developing countries in devising innovative solutions to protect and preserve marine ecosystems while promoting economic growth and equity. This will be done by fostering collaboration and the exchange of information and experiences among participants, as well as leveraging the expertise of national and international scientists, policy-makers, and economists. In doing so, the programme will strengthen the collective effort to achieve the UN's 14<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal: "Life below water".

"This programme is distinctive because it not only aims to provide resources but also seeks to facilitate international cooperation and information sharing on the challenges facing the ocean," says Tiago Pitta e Cunha, Executive Director of Oceano Azul Foundation. "By

offering access to solutions tailored to the needs of decision-makers, this new programme will equip participants with additional knowledge, enabling them to make effective ocean policy decisions at both national and international levels," he adds.

The programme will include an annual session, held in person in Lisbon at Oceano Azul Foundation's premises. The inaugural edition will run over five days, from October 14 to 18, comprising a total of 30 hours of intensive work with a group of national and international experts.

Applications for participation can be submitted until July 30, with the selection process taking place between August 10 and September 5. The selected participants will be announced five days later, on September 10.

### **About Oceano Azul Foundation**

Oceano Azul Foundation is an international foundation, based in Portugal and established in 2017. Under the motto *From the ocean's point of view*, its mission is to contribute to a healthy and productive ocean for the benefit of all life on the planet. Grounded in science, the Foundation's work contributes to protecting, developing, and valuing the Blue Natural Capital, integrating key areas such as Ocean Conservation, International Ocean Advocacy, Blue Economy, while also focusing on Literacy and Education and Civil Society Empowerment. The Foundation's change model allows it to develop projects focused on Marine Protected Areas and sustainable fisheries, while also advising governments and decision-makers to advance the international ocean agenda, notably by working with other foundations, civil society organisations, the UN, and EU. The Foundation also conducts communication campaigns to increase the impact of its actions through greater awareness and consciousness about the importance of protecting and restoring the ocean.

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