



Our ref.: 6780810/2026/ESDP/OCE

15 September 2026

Annex.: 1 (available in English only)

Subject: Mobilizing the International Alliance for the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), and
Invitation to the Launch Event (New York, 23 September 2026)

Action Required: Request WMO Members to participate in the International Alliance for GOOS and commit pledges to and for ocean observing and GOOS

Dear Sir/Madam,

Sustained and resilient ocean observation is critical for early warning and disaster response, national security, global trade, ocean-based energy supply, ocean industries, and marine protection. In short, ocean observation constitutes critical infrastructure for Members of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) brings together states, institutions, scientists, and ocean professionals to observe the ocean in a coordinated, sustained, and globally integrated way. Established in 1991 led by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and co-sponsored by WMO, GOOS is at the core of global efforts to observe the ocean and deliver the essential global infrastructure required to understand our changing ocean. The purpose of GOOS is simple but powerful: to help the world understand and make decisions on ocean state, health, and changes.

The observing system operates across three interdependent levels:

- (i) National level, where observing assets are owned and operated;
- (ii) Regional level, where national efforts are connected to broader operational coordination;
- (iii) Global level, where coordination is provided through GOOS, its national and regional focal points, expert and technical panels, and operations supported by the IOC-UNESCO and WMO secretariats and a wide range of partners. This level is connected to the work of WMO through its Infrastructure Commission.

Value is lost wherever these levels are not effectively aligned, as efforts may be duplicated, gaps remain unaddressed, and data does not reach those who need it or is not interoperable. Strengthening coordination is therefore the first necessary step. Coordination enables gaps in the global and regional observing systems to be identified and prioritized, and resources to be allocated accordingly.

To: Permanent Representatives of Members with WMO

cc: WMO Regional Association Presidents
Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
Vidar Helgesen, IOC Executive Secretary

It also establishes the accountability necessary to justify sustained public investment. To respond to this need, the current GOOS reform is building a clear objective-setting and results framework.

However, coordination efforts such as those led by the GOOS secretariat are at risk from underfunding, over-reliance on volunteerism, and a lack of sustained financing. This challenge has been recognized by governing bodies, including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) at its most recent Executive Council session in June 2026, and remains a matter of critical concern to WMO as a co-sponsor.

As part of its OceanEye initiative, the European Union announced the International Alliance for GOOS in March 2026. The alliance aims at mobilizing commitments from governments globally to strengthen GOOS. Co-chaired by President von der Leyen, European Commission, and Prime Minister Mark Carney, Canada, the Alliance will be launched in New York on 23 September 2026, at a high-level event where governments will be invited to pledge concrete additional support.

The objectives of the International Alliance are to:

- Broaden support for GOOS, including through financial or in-kind contributions;
- Improve governance to make the GOOS approach more structured, effective, and equitably funded, while securing continuous data collection and access;
- Sustain infrastructure by securing and maintaining existing ocean observing infrastructure;
- Close critical gaps in in situ observations to complete global networks;
- Support commitments made internationally and multilaterally.

Members of the International Alliance may include countries, philanthropic organizations, and private partners. The draft GOOS reform proposal also identifies the need for a long-term Donor Coordination Group for GOOS—a concept that is made real through the International Alliance for GOOS.

The International Alliance for GOOS will be officially launched in the margins of the 81st United Nations General Assembly High-Level Week:

- Event Title: OceanEye International Alliance: Stronger together for Ocean Observation.
- Co-Hosts: The European Union (EU) and the Government of Canada.
- Date & Time: 23 September 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
- Location: UN Headquarters, New York (to be confirmed).

I encourage all WMO Members to participate in the Alliance and commit pledges to and for ocean observing and GOOS. The launch event represents a critical first step in this long-term Alliance, and Members are strongly encouraged to consider this mobilization as part of their ongoing national agendas.

For any further questions regarding the launch event or the pledging process, please contact Albert Fischer (afischer@wmo.int) at the WMO Secretariat or Joanna Post at the GOOS Secretariat (j.post@unesco.org). For general coordination regarding WMO's co-sponsorship of GOOS, Members may also contact the WMO Secretariat.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Saulo', written in a cursive style.

Prof. Celeste Saulo
Secretary-General