

# Our sea, source of wealth

## Blue Economy

### Panelists

**Octavio Aburto Oropeza**

**Moderator**

Professor–Researcher  
Scripps Institution of  
Oceanography University of  
California

**Andrew Rhodes Espinoza**

Biodiversity and Sustainable  
Oceans Expert  
Coordinator for Oceans Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs of Mexico

**Yolanda Cortés López**

Promoter of aquatic activities for  
people with disabilities, Director of  
SunRider Tours

**Mtro. Alfredo González Reyes**

General Director of Territorial  
Coordination of Procedures and  
Services of Economy and Head of  
the Executive Secretariat of the  
National Council of the 2030  
Agenda for Sustainable  
Development

**October 7, 2022**

# Our sea, a source of wealth

## Octavio Aburto Oropeza

Octavio Aburto Oropeza presented a comprehensive vision of the oceans, describing them as fundamental to human life because of their ability to regulate climate, provide coastal protection, sustain great biodiversity, provide food and employment, and offer recreation. However, he warned that the ocean faces critical overexploitation, especially in the Gulf of California, once called “the world's aquarium,” which no longer maintains its splendor due to excessive resource extraction.

Aburto stressed the importance of conserving the oceans to ensure the ecosystem services they provide and which we take for granted, in a context in which climate change is already inevitable. He pointed out encouraging examples of communities such as Cabo Pulmo and Punta Abreojos, which have implemented sustainable practices in their fishing activities, showing that it is possible to take care of the ocean while developing economically. To achieve this change, he emphasized the need for a blue economy that balances economic development with environmental conservation.

*We cannot continue to develop in this way and lose the services that ecosystems provide us... we need to think about a positive future and look for synergies between sectors.*

**Octavio Aburto**



# Towards a Sustainable Ocean Economy in Mexico

## Andrew Rhodes Espinoza

Andrew Rhodes Espinoza presented advances on the sustainable ocean economy in Mexico, mentioning the creation of the first ocean assembly composed of senators and deputies to review the legal framework and promote a comprehensive vision on ocean policy. He reflected on how humanity has become immune to bad news, especially those related to environmental problems, and stressed the need to change this narrative to see the oceans as a source of well-being and solutions.

He explained that the high-level panel on ocean economics, initiated in 2018 by Norway and Palau, brings together 17 countries, including Mexico, working together on research and findings on biodiversity, offshore crime, climate change and other critical issues. This effort promotes a development agenda focused on three key pillars: effective ecosystem protection, sustainable production and fair prosperity. Member countries are collaborating to transform these pillars into a strategy to accelerate global action, and Mexico has begun an unprecedented multilateral implementation by officially publishing the strategy in the Official Journal of the Federation.

In his concluding remarks, Rhodes highlighted the importance of bridges of empathy and collective work, arguing that by understanding the perspectives of each sector we can move towards an ocean economy that balances protection, production and prosperity for planetary well-being.

# Adaptive Tourism

## Yolanda Cortés López

Yolanda Cortés López presented her approach to adaptive tourism in Baja California Sur, promoting the idea of “tourism for all” as a right that is expanding worldwide. She explained how this segment, which guarantees accessibility to people with disabilities, also opens up business opportunities. He emphasized that this tourism includes people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities, and stressed the potential of Baja California Sur, especially La Paz, due to its safe and accessible natural conditions.

*Tourism for all is no longer a necessity, it is an opportunity... Baja California Sur has the perfect conditions to be an accessible and environmentally sensitive destination.*

**Yolanda Cortes Lopez**

He stressed that the demand is considerable, mentioning that in Latin America there are 80 million people with disabilities, while globally this figure exceeds one billion. In addition, each person with a disability usually travels accompanied, generating an average consumption higher than that of other tourists.

In addition, Yolanda believes it is essential that governments see tourism for people with disabilities not only as an opportunity for inclusion but also as a significant economic potential. Her vision is for La Paz to become the first fully accessible city in Mexico, a role model that demonstrates what can be achieved when all sectors of society and government work together towards a common goal.



# Mtro. Alfredo González Reyes



*To change the order we need a state that guarantees rights, not one that depends on buying them... and for that we have to bet more on the public than on the private.*

**Alfredo González**

Alfredo González Reyes reflected on the need to rethink the current social and economic order to allow justice and freedom in a real way. He explained that the current economic system has consolidated enormous inequalities and power imbalances, the legacy of a history in which the richest nations achieved their position largely thanks to colonialism.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to redefine this order by setting global goals that promote peace, justice and sustainability. However, Alfredo stressed that each country and community experiences this transition differently due to their historical and social contexts. The 2030 Agenda, he pointed out, should not be seen as a list of goals to be met, but as a common horizon that, although achieved at different paces, aims to achieve equity and dignity for all. He proposed that, instead of betting only on the private sector, we should strengthen the public and collective sectors, since relying solely on the market to satisfy basic rights and services will not lead us to the change we seek.

He concluded by urging a rethinking of power and the structure of privilege from a historical perspective, committing to a just transition that takes into account the diversity of contexts and needs, emphasizing that change depends on collective work and a truly global vision of equity.

# Conclusions

This panel highlighted the urgency of transforming the social and economic order towards a more just and sustainable model. Octavio Aburto Oropeza highlighted the need to protect the oceans through a blue economy that balances development and conservation. Andrew Rhodes Espinoza added that Mexico, together with other countries, is promoting an ocean agenda that prioritizes protection, sustainable production and fair prosperity. Yolanda Cortés López exemplified inclusive tourism in Baja California Sur as a sector that not only generates income, but also raises awareness and promotes respect for the environment. Alfredo González Reyes concluded that to achieve a just transition it is essential to rethink power structures, promoting equitable access to rights and strengthening the collective over the individual. Overall, the panel called for broad collaboration to build an inclusive and environmentally responsible future.



*We need to change the narrative: let's see the oceans as a solution for the well-being of us and the planet, not just as an exploitable resource.*

**Andrew Rhodes**

# Objective

You will learn about the importance of the seas and oceans as engines of economy due to their great potential for innovation and growth, as well as the urgency of their care for the survival of human beings.





“ *We don't just need to change what we do, but how we do it. We need to rethink the order we maintain without question, an order that often deepens inequalities.* ”

**Alfredo González**



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