



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**Multi-stakeholders' Dialogue on Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity**

**UN-Oceans statement**

**By**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of the members of UN-Oceans, in my capacity as focal point.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Small island developing States have an intrinsic economic, social, cultural and environmental connection with oceans and seas. They are thus well-placed to develop sustainable ocean-based economies. The building blocks for such development include adequate human, technical, technological and financial capabilities as well as cooperation and coordination at all levels. Indeed, the benefits and opportunities that the oceans can provide for Small island developing States in the short and long-term are also very much dependent on an integrated and ecosystem approach to the management and governance of ocean spaces and activities.

The sustainable development of oceans is important to all of us. This underscores the importance of cooperation and partnerships at all levels and among all relevant stakeholders. Such cooperation and partnerships are essential to assist Small island developing States in the development of sustainable ocean-based economies and fulfilment of the aspiration of the peoples for sustained livelihoods and wellbeing.

The United Nations system is well placed to play an effective role in assisting Small island developing States in advancing sustainable ocean-related development activities based on an integrated and ecosystem approach. Its organizations and entities deal with various ocean issues and deliver capacity-building, technical assistance and other financial support.

Through UN-Oceans - the inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the UN system - its 22 members, which include the International Seabed Authority, are exploring possible synergies among their mandates and activities. They do so with a view to fostering a coordinated and inter-sectoral approach to ocean management and the identification of areas of joint activities and future partnerships.

Members of UN-Oceans are already engaged through various partnerships in assisting Small island developing States in implementing their commitments under various legal instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Many of these partnerships are showcased at this Conference and I will highlight a few.

Key to enhancing ocean-related economic activities and development in general is capacity-building. In order to be effective, capacity-building efforts should address as much as possible the continuously growing and evolving nature of ocean affairs in a multidisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral manner. In response to the capacity-building needs of Small island developing States in the area of technical and professional expertise, many UN-Oceans members are providing training and/or administering fellowships. For example, to date, 35 persons from Small island developing States have received fellowship awards under two Fellowship Programmes administered by my Office, through the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, including one in partnership with The Nippon Foundation of Japan.

Furthermore, in the area of research, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has jointly developed a partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO which we will introduce later. The International Seabed Authority, through its Endowment Fund, has been providing support to qualified scientists from developing countries, including Small island developing States. The International Atomic Energy Agency is providing scientific training for Small island developing States to monitor the impacts on their coastal waters of nuclear, as well as other pollutants and ocean acidification. Training to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets is being provided through workshops convened by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the context of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative. In the area of maritime transport, the International Maritime Organization has been

providing, education, training and advice and sponsored fellowships for Small island developing States to support their special shipping needs, including the development of measures to protect the marine environment from discharges from ships. In the area of fisheries, the “Blue Growth Initiative” of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the sustainable and integrated management of fisheries resources, *inter alia*, fosters partnerships, so that Small island developing States, amongst others, generate and equitably benefit from their marine resources.

Other activities of UN-Oceans members which are focussed especially on the human dimension, include the specific training programme for Small island developing States developed by the International Labour Organization to assist them in ensuring decent conditions of work on board ships, fishing vessels and offshore platforms; and the “Global Initiative on Protection at Sea” of the United Nations Refugees agency which is aimed at ensuring that asylum-seekers and refugees travelling by sea can find protection.

Technical assistance provided by UN-Oceans members has become increasingly cross-sectoral in scope. Examples of such partnerships with a Small island developing States component include the Global Partnership for Marine Litter led by the United Nations Environment Programme, together with the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and others; and the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network, supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency in partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, UNESCO and others. The World Meteorological Organization, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNESCO, the World Bank, and others developed the Global Framework for Climate Services for Small island developing States, which is focussed, *inter alia*, on disaster risk reduction, food security, and water resources management.

UN-Oceans members are also engaged in mobilizing financial support for building capacity. For example, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States organized a Private Sector Partnerships Forum at this Conference, and the World Bank is leading the Global Partnership for Oceans, a multi-stakeholder alliance which includes the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Maritime Organization, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme. Other financial mechanisms include assistance funds, such as the Assistance Fund under Part VII of the United

Nations Fish Stocks Agreement administered by the Food and Agriculture Organization in collaboration with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, and Trust Funds to support the implementation of legal instruments and facilitate participation in intergovernmental processes.

These are but a few of the numerous initiatives and endeavours that the UN system and the International Seabed Authority can deliver. I would like to conclude my remarks by highlighting that effective partnerships for sustainable capacity-building of Small island developing States require clear and achievable goals and objectives responding to the needs and priorities identified by the Small island developing States, the necessary financial resources, and, in particular, the buy-in and commitment from relevant stakeholders. For its part, the members of UN-Oceans are committed to the provision of continued assistance to Small island developing States in their endeavours to achieve sustainable development, including through the development of a sustainable ocean economy.