



UN-Oceans' statement to the nineteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

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Conference Room 1**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my capacity as UN-Oceans Focal Point, I am pleased to provide you with a brief statement on the work of UN-Oceans on behalf of its 24 members, under this agenda item 4 entitled "Inter-agency cooperation and coordination".

In line with the terms of reference of UN-Oceans, which also provide for reporting to ensure transparency and accountability, this statement aims at presenting information on UN-Oceans' activities since the eighteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process.

You may recall that in my statement in this forum last year I highlighted UN-Oceans' preparations for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, also known as "The Ocean Conference", which was held in New York, from 5 – 9 June 2017.

Apart from its significant contribution to the Partnership Dialogues at the Ocean Conference, the involvement of UN-Oceans in the Conference, consisted mostly of side events organized either jointly or individually by UN-Oceans members, in partnership with various stakeholders. You may recall that during the plenary at the Conference, I also delivered a general statement on behalf of UN-Oceans. In addition, of particular note, UN-Oceans launched a voluntary commitment on "Raising awareness of relevant regulatory and policy frameworks and its members' activities in support of their implementation, as a foundation for conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and their resources". At the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum in July 2017, UN-Oceans organized a side event entitled: "Monitor and review Sustainable Development Goal 14" to highlight the importance of assessments and of collecting

science-based data to monitor Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The latest UN-Oceans face-to-face meeting provided a very good opportunity to discuss other follow-up actions to the Ocean Conference and the 2030 Agenda. That meeting was hosted by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO from 26 to 28 March 2018 and chaired by its Executive Secretary and Assistant Director General of UNESCO, Mr. Vladimir Ryabinin. Mr. Peter Thomson, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean who attended the UN-Oceans meeting provided information on developments in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, including regarding the establishment of Communities of Ocean Action and voluntary commitments. In this regard, UN-Oceans members identified a number of forthcoming intergovernmental meetings as opportunities to implement the voluntary commitment they had registered at the Ocean Conference. To that effect, they are collaborating in the organization of side-events at those meetings.

Furthermore, at the face-to-face meeting, UN-Oceans members discussed the development of a methodology for the indicator of target 14.c of Sustainable Development Goal 14. You will recall that target 14.c. refers to the need to "Enhance the

conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of 'The Future we want'".

However, as a new stand-alone Goal, many targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14 have no recognized baseline information for their assessment and measurement. Goal 14 requires collection by States of a range of data relating to all ocean-related activities as identified in the Goal and its targets.

The indicator for target 14.c that is included in the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda was initially proposed by UN-Oceans. Indicator 14.c.1 reads as follows: "Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources".

There is a sense of urgency now to progress in the development of the methodology. Some of the targets in

Sustainable Development Goal 14 are due to be implemented by 2020. A proposed methodology has been developed by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea as the custodian entity of the indicator of 14.c. in close coordination with other UN-Oceans members. It involves the distribution of a questionnaire consisting of brief questions on the implementation of binding and non-binding international instruments relevant for the implementation of Goal 14 and its targets. UN-Oceans members have also identified a proposed list of such instruments.

Last week on 11 June, UN-Oceans held a side event to introduce the proposed methodology to States. Some delegations already provided comments and constructive suggestions which will be considered by UN-Oceans members and reflected in a revised proposal. Currently, the way ahead in considering this issue further is that UN-Oceans members will hold a second side event in the course of the informal consultations on the draft General Assembly resolution on oceans and the law of the sea. The objective will be two-fold: to receive feedback from delegations about the updated methodology; and to invite States to volunteer for a pilot testing of the methodology.

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Another important matter that was discussed at the face-to-face meeting, is the implementation plan for the “United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development”. You may recall that General Assembly resolution 72/73 proclaimed the Decade for the years 2021 – 2030 and invited UN-Oceans and its participants to collaborate with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO in preparing an Implementation Plan for the Decade. At the fifty-first session of the IOC Executive Council at the beginning of July, a roadmap towards the Decade will be discussed by IOC member States and multiple partners, including some members of UN-Oceans.

At the latest UN-Oceans face-to-face meeting, UN-Oceans members also considered and adopted the UN-Oceans Work Programme for 2018 which reflects the traditional aspects of the UN-Oceans mandate, such as the organization of joint side events and continued development of the inventory of mandates and activities by UN-Oceans members. With regard to the latter, I wish to call your attention to the survey which has been made available in the room. Its aim is to assess the utility and ease of use of the inventory. I would remind delegations that the inventory is available on the UN-Oceans website (www.unoceans.org).

The UN-Oceans work plan also includes new activities relating to the Decade, the UN-Oceans voluntary commitment and providing assistance, as required, to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, including with regard to the "Communities of Ocean Action". Reference is also made to the call on the United Nations Secretary-General in the declaration "Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action" to continue his efforts to support the implementation of Goal 14 in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by enhancing inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, taking into consideration the work of UN-Oceans. I am pleased to note in this regard, that two organizations have recently expressed their interest, supported by UN-Oceans members, in becoming members of UN-Oceans. These are the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Their future participation will provide an opportunity to further strengthen inter-agency cooperation and coordination on the conservation and management of living marine resources and climate change and oceans.

As regards the latter, I wish to highlight that UN-Oceans was invited to address the forty-eighth session of the Subsidiary Body

for Scientific and Technological Advice of the UNFCCC on 30 April 2018. Furthermore, UN-Oceans also organized a side event on “Ocean and climate: A resilient ocean for future generations” in the margins of the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the second part of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, in Bonn in November 2017.

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I would note that the one-year Work Programme adopted by UN-Oceans takes into account that the General Assembly decided to defer the review of the terms of reference for the work of UN-Oceans until its seventy-third session, beginning in September this year. In this regard, I wish to recall that last year, during the informal consultations on General Assembly resolution on oceans and the law of the sea, some Member States expressed the view they would welcome the preparation by UN-Oceans of an informal paper to assist them in their review. I am pleased to inform you that UN-Oceans members have prepared such a document. It is available in this room for your information. As already mentioned last year, UN-Oceans stands ready to share its views on how to

enhance its effectiveness in the context of the review of its terms of reference.

Before concluding this overview of the work of UN-Oceans, I would like to note that the report of the UN-Oceans face-to-face meeting is available on its website.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I could not end my remarks without once more making a reference to the topic of focus of this meeting. The report of the United Nations Secretary-General highlights that anthropogenic underwater noise is a pervasive global issue. Many human activities introduce sound into the marine environment with a wide range of effects on many types of marine biota, as well as resulting socioeconomic impacts. Cooperation and coordination, within and across different sectors, is thus vital to building capacity, further developing scientific understanding of anthropogenic underwater sound and addressing its impacts in a cross-sectoral and integrated manner. As noted in the report, several UN-Oceans members are already active on this topic. But more action is needed, to foster greater cooperation and coordination to address anthropogenic underwater noise and its

potential transboundary impacts and also to address cumulative impacts.

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In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of UN-Oceans for their inputs to the annual reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, including with regard to the topic of focus of this meeting of the Informal Consultative Process.

I thank you for your attention.