

**Statement to the twentieth meeting of the United Nations
Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and
the Law of the Sea: “Measuring progress in the
implementation of SDG 14 on the basis of the indicator for
target 14.c: UN-Oceans’ proposed methodology”**

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**New York, 13 June 2019
Conference Room 1**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen,**

As mentioned earlier, in my capacity as UN-Oceans Focal Point, I am pleased to provide you with a brief statement on the work of UN-Oceans in developing a draft methodology for the agreed indicator to monitor progress towards the achievement of target 14.c under Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Indicator 14.c.1 is currently classified by the Inter-Agency Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) as a tier III indicator, which means that no internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed and tested. Once a proposed methodology has been developed and received the necessary support from States, and a pilot data collection has been conducted, a request for reclassification of that indicator to tier II can be submitted by DOALOS to the IAEG-SDGs for its approval. A reclassification would trigger the beginning of the national reporting by States and for DOALOS to calculate and contribute global and regional aggregates to the Global Indicator Database and the Secretary-General's annual global progress report.

I wish to emphasize that there is a sense of urgency to progress in the development of this methodology during 2019, particularly since the Expert Group will be conducting a Comprehensive Review of the global indicator framework throughout 2019 and will submit its proposed refinements, revisions, replacements, additions and deletions to the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2020 for its consideration.

Distinguished Delegates,

You will recall that, in target 14.c, States made the commitment 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”.

The indicator which was adopted to monitor progress against target 14.c, indicator 14.c.1, calls for an assessment of the “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 UNCLOS, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources”.

DOALOS, which has been designated as the custodian agency for indicator 14.c.1, has been leading the development of a proposed methodology for indicator 14.c.1, in close collaboration with other UN-Oceans members and in consultation with a number of States. Indeed, the methodology for indicator 14.c.1 has been discussed with States at four previous side events organized on this matter, including on 4 April this year. The outcome of those discussions is reflected in the revised Explanatory Note on this

topic, which was circulated by email to all Permanent Missions early this week and is available at the side of the room through a QR code. A few copies are also available for your convenience in this room.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since we distributed the Explanatory Note, an informal information session was convened by DOALOS yesterday, on Wednesday, 12 June, to answer questions on the draft methodology reflected in that Note from delegations, in advance of this meeting. Additional proposals were made at that information session, to which I will revert later.

Let me first turn to outlining the draft methodology, and the rationale for that methodology, as currently reflected in the Explanatory Note.

In that document, it is proposed that the methodology would consist of a list of instruments, in respect of which States would be invited to report on ratification/accession and implementation.

With regard to the format of that voluntary reporting, I wish to clarify the following. While members of UN-Oceans were aware

that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides for States to report to the High-Level Political Forum on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals through national reporting platforms, members of UN-Oceans were also aware of the difficulties in extracting internationally comparable data from those platforms to provide a standardized assessment of progress by States in the implementation of target 14.c as well as the lack of platforms in some States. These difficulties are compounded by the fact that target 14.c, which highlights the importance of international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, is a means of implementation for all the other targets under Goal 14.

It is thus proposed in the Explanatory Note that a voluntary web-based questionnaire, in which all States would be invited to participate, would be the most streamlined, efficient and least resource-demanding method to enable DOALOS, in its role as the custodian agency for indicator 14.c.1, to compile data and calculate global and regional aggregates for submission to the Global SDG Indicator Database and for the report of the Secretary-General to the High-Level Political Forum.

The Explanatory Note envisages that the questionnaire would pose two questions. States would be invited to respond to these questions, or alternatively, to provide a direct link to their national

reporting platforms where the responses to these questions are contained.

The first question would be subdivided. States would be invited to respond to two simple yes/no questions with respect to participation in certain specified ocean-related instruments, in particular UNCLOS as well as its implementing agreements, and implementation of those instruments through legal frameworks at the national level.

Space would also be provided for States to share further information regarding implementation of those instruments.

The second question would address the aspect of the indicator that concerns policy and institutional frameworks. Here, States would be invited to indicate as an additional concrete illustration of efforts towards implementation of international law as reflected in UNCLOS whether they have a national policy for the ocean, and/or a national institution or other mechanism, such as a national focal point or an inter-agency or inter-departmental working group, with responsibility for ensuring that the problems of ocean space are considered through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach.

The template questionnaire attached to the Explanatory Note also envisages the possibility for States to identify and communicate their capacity-building priorities and needs, if any, with respect to the implementation of relevant international instruments.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This background was presented at the information session held yesterday, as I mentioned earlier. At that meeting, the draft methodology was further discussed, and additional suggestions were made by delegations.

In particular, discussions at that session indicated that some delegations still wish to have more time to reflect on the draft methodology, including with respect to the list of instruments to be included within its scope, before contemplating its approval. In this regard, a proposal was made to continue discussions on the methodology in the context of the General Assembly's informal consultations on the draft resolution on oceans and the law of the sea at the 73rd session.

It was also proposed that the methodology for indicator 14.c.1 should invite States to report only on ratification/accession and

implementation of UNCLOS and its implementing agreements. States would also be invited to report on other ocean-related instruments which they consider also implement international law as reflected in UNCLOS for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

I have come to the end of my statement, and we would now welcome your comments and questions.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to remain for the remainder of this session. However, the Director of DOALOS and representatives of the United Nations Statistics Division are ready to address any questions and comments that might arise. I look forward to hearing about your discussions with the hope that we can assist you in enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS.

I wish you a successful and fruitful dialogue.

Thank you.