



**UN-Oceans' statement to the Sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea
9 April 2015**

**Statement of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs
The United Nations Legal Counsel**

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 UN-Oceans on behalf of its members. I wish to recall that the revised terms of reference of UN-Oceans approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/70, provide for reporting by UN-Oceans to the Informal Consultative Process, upon request by the General Assembly. In order to ensure transparency and accountability, in line with the terms of reference, this statement aims at presenting a progress report on UN-Oceans' activities.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UN-Oceans has continued to work towards the identification of possible areas for collaboration and synergies as mandated in the revised terms of reference as well as within the context of its Work Programme for 2014 to 2015.

In this regard, and with reference to the development of an inventory of mandates, priorities and ongoing and planned activities of UN-Oceans members, I am pleased to inform you that the first step is completed. This step has consisted of identifying relevant mandates. UN-Oceans members will next proceed with the further elaboration of the initial inventory through a newly established electronic platform. Members of UN-Oceans have agreed on developing the inventory in the form of a user-friendly online searchable database detailing the mandates and the activities of each of the members of UN-Oceans. The database will be continuously updated.

I would like to highlight that the initial version of the electronic platform for the inventory has been developed and generously funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). That version will be further refined based on the suggestions of UN-Oceans members to be submitted to FAO within the next month. The next step for UN-Oceans, which the online database will facilitate, will be to identify synergies or joint activities illustrating existing and possible areas for collaboration. As soon as

the initial inventory of activities is completed - during the course of this year - it will be made available on the website of UN-Oceans (www.unoceans.org).

The inventory is expected not only to assist the members of UN-Oceans in their work towards enhancing coordination and coherence. It may also provide information of benefit to Member States in their own coordination efforts. It is noted that continued updates and fine-tuning of the inventory, including towards increasing its user-friendly operation, will require sustainable funding. In this regard, as of today, there have been no UN-Oceans earmarked contributions to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General to support the promotion of international law which is referred to in resolution 69/245 of 29 December 2014 on oceans and the law of sea. The General Assembly had, as an interim measure, invited Member States and others in a position to do so to make financial earmarked contributions to that trust fund. Since our last reporting to this meeting in 2014, as focal point of UN-Oceans, I attended the Third United Nations Conference on Small Islands Developing States, from 1 to 4 September 2014 in the Independent State of Samoa. I delivered a statement on behalf of UN-Oceans at the Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogues on Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity. In that statement, I highlighted the role of UN-Oceans as an inter-agency coordination mechanism on oceans and coastal issues, including with regard to promoting capacity-building activities to assist Small Island developing States towards the sustainable development of the oceans. My statement, which benefitted from the contribution of all members of UN-Oceans, is available on the website of UN-Oceans.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UN-Oceans has continued its work through a number of telephone conferences. Upon a suggestion from several of its members, it was proposed that every other year UN-Oceans could hold one face-to-face meeting on a rotation basis, at the headquarters of one of its members. Accordingly, following the generous invitation from the International Maritime Organization, UN-Oceans held a face-to-face meeting on 20 March 2015 at IMO Headquarters in London.

At the meeting, which was chaired by Mr. Stefan Micallef, Director of the Marine Environment Division of IMO, UN-Oceans members discussed traditional items on its agenda relating to the ongoing development of the inventory, the website of UN-Oceans, and contributions to the reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea. In anticipation of the next step in the development of the inventory of mandates and activities, several UN-Oceans members presented case studies of ongoing and possible future joint activities.

At the March meeting, UN-Oceans members were also informed of the status of preparation of the first global integrated marine assessment of the Regular Process. As you are aware, in accordance with paragraph 267 of General Assembly resolution 69/245, the summary of the first global integrated marine assessment should be submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process to be issued as

a document of the General Assembly for its final approval by the Assembly at its seventieth session. I would note that several members of UN-Oceans have contributed to the peer review of that assessment.

Members also discussed the topic of focus of the sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process. During the discussions, Members acknowledged that UN-Oceans, as a coordination mechanism, does contribute to the integrated consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the context of oceans and sustainable development. In this regard, examples of activities, which particularly provide for the integration of the three dimensions, such as maritime transport, were highlighted. UN-Oceans members also exchanged information and views on:

- events or activities of interest to the members, including the outcome of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction,
- preparations for World Oceans Day 2015, the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda process,
- the Paris United Nations Climate Change Conference,
- the next session of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection to be hosted by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, and ,
- other forthcoming meetings and planned activities.

It was recognized that through such an exchange, UN-Oceans had the advantage of raising awareness of the ongoing activities of its members, which also provided the opportunity for UN-Oceans to “deliver as one” through strengthened cooperation.

In this regard, and with a view to providing information to States on UN-Oceans members’ activities relating to oceans and climate change, it was agreed to prepare a consolidated UN-Oceans statement to be presented at the forty-second meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in June 2015. The statement will be delivered under agenda item 6 “Matters relating to science and review”. In addition, proposals for a UN-Oceans side event and an exhibit on oceans and climate change, as well as on ocean acidification, will be put forward for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Paris toward the end of this year.

The report of the March meeting will be available on the website of UN-Oceans shortly. Before ending my remarks, DOALOS would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of UN-Oceans for their inputs to the annual report 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 am also very pleased to see that several representatives of UN-Oceans are participating in this meeting, including as panellists.

I thank you for your attention.