



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**United Nations - The Nippon Foundation Fellowship Programme 2017  
Alumni Meeting**

**Reception**

**“Our Oceans, Our Islands, Our Future: Partnering for the Implementation of  
SDG 14”**

**Remarks**

**by**

**Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares**

Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs  
and United Nations Legal Counsel

6:15 to 8:00 pm, Sputnik Lounge  
United Nations Headquarters, New York  
7 June 2017

*[Introduction by H.E. Ronald Jumeau, Ambassador of the Republic of Seychelles to the UN, and  
Special Envoy for Climate Change and SIDS Issues]*

Thank you, Ambassador Jumeau.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be with you here this evening.

I offer my sincere appreciation to the Global Island Partnership, represented here tonight by Their Excellencies President Remengesau, Prime Minister Mitchell, Vice-President Meriton, and Deputy Premier Pickering.

I also would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Nippon Foundation, the Waitt Foundation, the Waitt Institute, and National Geographic Pristine Seas for their support in the organization of this event.



The Ocean Conference presents an opportunity for us all to reaffirm our commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources. While oceans are the lifeblood of our blue planet, their carrying capacity is near or at its limit. It is clear that urgent action on a global scale is needed to protect the world's oceans from the many pressures they face and ensure their sustainability.

What is also clear this week is that there are many actors working to reverse the current trend. I have been in awe of the many initiatives and individuals that are working together across so many sectors to make a difference.

In particular, tonight I would like to reflect on the importance of advancing capacity-building efforts to assist developing States, in particular small island developing States, in meeting international commitments, including through the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the SAMOA Pathway, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 14, in a way that is ambitious and meaningful.

With that goal in mind, earlier today, I was delighted to join with Chairman Sasakawa of the Nippon Foundation as we announced our new "Sustainable Ocean Programme" to build capacity for ocean governance in developing States. It is our intention to build upon the long-standing partnership between the United Nations and the Nippon Foundation to provide additional multidisciplinary training and research opportunities across all sectors of ocean affairs and the law of the sea.

Learning and supporting one another, in partnership and in friendship, is how we will realize Sustainable Development Goal 14 and the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Success in implementing SDG 14 can lead to the realization of other Sustainable Development Goals addressing food security, poverty reduction, gender equality, sustainable production and consumption, and climate action.

Together, we can share knowledge and build human capacities to ensure that all those who need it have the tools to better manage oceans and coastal areas.

I look forward to working with the Nippon Foundation and with all of you, friends and colleagues, to put this initiative into action.

Thank you.