



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

The United Nations Legal Counsel's message on World Tuna Day 2 May 2017

Many countries, in particular Small Island Developing States, depend heavily on tuna resources for food security and nutrition, economic development, employment, government revenue and livelihoods, amongst others. At present more than 80 countries have tuna fisheries, and thousands of tuna fishing vessels operate in all the oceans, making trade in tuna a significant contributor to the global economy. However, increasing threats resulting from human activities, such as overfishing, and the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification, as highlighted in the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, adversely impact the conservation and sustainable use of tuna stocks.

Therefore, on the occasion of the very first celebration of the World Tuna Day since its designation by the General Assembly last year, I strongly urge all stakeholders to make every effort for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of tuna resources which is important for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the critical importance of effectively implementing the international legal framework, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which has been strengthened by the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, recommendations of its Review Conference, annual General Assembly resolutions on sustainable fisheries, as well as other efforts by the international community at the global, regional and national levels. The Ocean Conference, next month, will provide a valuable opportunity for States and all other stakeholders to support implementation of the targets in Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda.

At this opportune moment, let us all commit to protecting our precious tuna resources and their surrounding ecosystems and using these resources sustainably for generations to come.