



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**Statement for the evening reception onboard the Peace Boat to celebrate  
World Oceans Day**

**by**

**Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares**

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

**7 June 2019**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, United Nations Legal Counsel and UN-Oceans Focal Point, I am pleased to welcome you to this year's World Oceans Day evening reception. I would like to thank Lucie Brigham, Chief of Office, United Nations Office for Partnerships, for providing us this opportunity to be here this evening. I would like to give a special thanks to Mr. Yoshioka Tatsuya, founder of the Peace Boat, for his generosity, and to his dedicated staff who have worked for months to make this evening possible.

While I am assured that we will remain docked this evening, I am hopeful that our greater proximity to the ocean will keep us focused on the primary purpose of World Oceans Day: to raise awareness about the crucial role the ocean plays in our lives and the important ways each of us can contribute to maintaining its vitality, health and resilience, so that future generations may continue to enjoy the many benefits the ocean bestows upon us.

The theme of World Oceans Day this year, "Gender and the ocean", provides an important and timely opportunity to explore the gender dimension of humankind's relationship with the ocean. In particular, it serves as a way to



highlight the need for all people, regardless of their gender to have an equal opportunity to contribute to, and benefit from, the ocean.

However, as the Secretary General said in his annual World Oceans Day message delivered this morning, the effects of pollution and climate change on the oceans have had a disproportionate impact on women. For too long, women have been unable to share equally in the benefits of the ocean. I echo his call to governments, international organizations, private companies, communities and individuals to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a crucial contribution to meeting current and future ocean challenges.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I invite you to enjoy this evening's festivities and to take this opportunity to connect with others determined to create an inclusive and sustainable relationship with the ocean.

