

MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE OCEANS MEETING 2016

We, the Ministers responsible for Ocean/ Fisheries/ Maritime Affairs, having met in Lisbon on June, the 3rd, 2016, by invitation of the Portuguese Minister of the Sea, Mrs. Ana Paula Vitorino, in the framework of the Oceans Meeting 2016;

Recalling the declaration of the ministerial meeting of the Blue Week, held in Lisbon, in June 2015;

Recognizing the contribution of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations to the maintenance of peace, justice and progress for all peoples of the world;

Emphasizing the universal and unified character of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), setting out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out;

Reaffirming that UNCLOS is of strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector, and that its integrity needs to be maintained, as recognized also by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in chapter 17 of Agenda 21;

Welcoming the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1, of 25 September 2015 entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development";

Looking forward, in this regard, to the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14, to be held in Fiji, from 5 to 9 June 2017, as convened by General Assembly resolution 70/ 226 of 22 December 2015;

Further welcoming the adoption of the Paris Agreement negotiated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), while recognizing the importance of raising awareness on the adverse impacts of climate change on the marine environment, marine biodiversity and sea level, and noting in this regard the organization of an "Oceans Day" at the twenty-first session of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties;

Acknowledging the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) progress in addressing air emissions from international shipping;

Also welcoming the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/292 of 19 June 2015 on the "Development of an international legally-binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction";

Further welcoming the adoption of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's Capacity Development Strategy in 2015 which will help member states achieve the SDGs and help all nations contribute to and benefit from the ocean observations and services essential to climate adaptation, hazard reduction, safe maritime commerce, food security and other key sectors of human welfare;

Reiterating the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, "The Future We Want", which noted, *inter alia*, role of healthy marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and sustainable aquaculture for food security and nutrition, and in this context have due attention to the contribution from fish towards meeting SDG 2 "*End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*";

Welcoming with appreciation the first global integrated marine assessment (United Nations World Ocean Assessment), while reiterating the need to strengthen the regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment in order to enhance the scientific basis for policymaking;

Acknowledging that the ocean covers 70% of Earth's surface, that it contains more than 90% of the planet's biological resources, that over 90% of the world's trade is made by sea and that the ocean is the *primary regulator of the global climate*;

Stressing the need to make the best use of the potential of the blue economy and promote economic growth, jobs creation and investments, whilst safeguarding healthy seas and oceans;

Emphasizing the importance of coordinated and sustainable marine policies in all their aspects, including, growth and energy;

Affirming the need to strengthen our presence at sea, to fight against piracy, trafficking and migrant smuggling and their root causes, and to reinforce regional solidarity and responsibility;

Further acknowledging that we share the political responsibility for the promotion of the blue economy in its multiple dimensions, including science based conservation of marine resources and ecosystems, as one tool for attaining the sustainable development in the oceans;

Having decided on the importance of promoting regional and international cooperation in order to mobilize strong and more ambitious action in ocean affairs by Governments, civil society, industry, universities, research centres and NGO's and all other relevant stakeholders, in particular regarding the following areas:

OCEAN LITERACY AND CULTURE

1. *Recognize* that the ocean is essential for our societies, in their multiple dimensions. To ensure our future, we should place the ocean at the heart of our lives and of our societies, while at the same time preserving this resource and its heritage for future generations;
2. *Affirm* that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and express our deep concern that all countries, particularly developing countries, are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, all of which threaten the efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals. In this regard, we emphasize that adaptation to climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority. We also recognize adverse impacts of climate change pose a risk to all countries and societies, in particular to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities,

representing in some cases a significant threat to their survival and viability and call on the international community to enhance its efforts to address these challenges;

3. *Recognize* that Government and stakeholders engagement is crucial for an effective ocean management and therefore encourage more co-ordination and consultation across sectors, especially where resources are moveable and renewable and/or stationary and mostly non-renewable;
4. *Recognize* that ocean governance and marine and maritime policies would benefit from more dialogue, coordination and integration of sectorial policies at all levels through the relevant national and international bodies, so that coherent strategies to enhance the sustainable development of marine and maritime sectors can be successful taking advantage of the synergies;
5. *Also affirm* that citizens should be informed through marine environmental actions and educational initiatives that engage all audiences through the implementation of international and national plans for marine education;
6. *Further affirm* the importance of protecting and enhancing marine natural and cultural heritage by developing marine protected areas or other relevant measures, and coordinating networks to preserve marine biodiversity at regional level, and also promoting their role for education and leisure;
7. *Decide to* implement initiatives, where applicable, promoting the direct contact with the seas and oceans, which benefit and educate younger generations, in a process of creating "Ocean Generations".

OCEAN SCIENCE & INNOVATION

8. *Affirm* that the ocean has an immense potential for scientific breakthroughs and solutions that can help us to solve today's environmental, economic and social crises, providing that we protect and preserve the marine environment;
9. *Acknowledge* that science, technology and data analytics could be more fully and effectively integrated into the ocean management process. The data challenges facing effective marine spatial planning and ocean management are considerable. There is a great deal of uncertainty as to what is in the ocean; very little is known of the interactive effects of different uses and users in the ocean; and the ocean is a dynamic environment undergoing significant changes. Large information gaps remain. Data on marine resources are fragmented, difficult to locate and biased towards the physical and ecological characteristics of the resource. This is due in part to the earlier emphasis on the biophysical rather than economic and social processes associated with the marine environment;
10. *Also acknowledge* that ocean governance and maritime spatial planning are only reliable if knowledge-based, defending an ecosystem-based approach to manage maritime spaces and coastlines;
11. *Recall*, in that sense, the importance of promoting the development of the marine scientific and technological capacity of States which may need and request technical assistance in this field, particularly developing States, including Small Island Developing States, landlocked and geographically disadvantaged States. Also note the need for cooperation to address the development needs and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries associated with, *inter alia*, their lack of direct territorial access to

the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, in line with the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action;

12. Believe, that the promotion of sustainable development, would benefit from an enhanced scientific knowledge of the ocean and increased technological capability and ocean literacy, to provide the basis for informed decision-making and adaptive management, to help to conserve and sustainably use marine resources, as well as to bridge the gap between research and industry, and in this regard we underline the importance of technical assistance, technology transfer as mutually agreed and capacity building, taking into account the special needs of developing countries;

BLUE ECONOMY

13. *Recognize* that we are highly dependent on the ocean, and that the ocean and its resources are increasingly recognised as indispensable for addressing the multiple challenges the planet faces. However, the ocean is already under stress from over-exploitation, pollution, declining biodiversity and climate change. Realizing the full potential of the ocean, therefore, will demand responsible, sustainable approaches to its economic sustainable development that incorporate science based observations, models and decision support tools to safeguard and sustain human communities and the environment;
14. *Affirm* that with respect to the economic development of the ocean it is important to foster established and emerging sustainable ocean-based industries and activities simultaneously, with increased actions to ensure healthy, productive and resilient ocean and coastal ecosystems through innovative, integrated, ecosystem-based and multidimensional approaches, consistent with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS and other relevant international agreements;
15. Acknowledge that blue economy, in the context of promotion of sustainable development, requires enhanced understanding of the multiple benefits of ecosystem functions, through for example mapping and assessment of ecosystem services. It also requires policies, legislation, infrastructure and incentives to facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy utilizing all available tools, including the ocean's enormous potential for renewable energy. Similarly the possibility to systematically reduce land-based and sea-based pollution should be addressed, including by means of effectively implementing the relevant international conventions;
16. *Recognize* the role of the private sector, including small and medium enterprises, in the development of the blue economy, as crucial actors in policy dialogue, innovation, jobs and wealth creation, as well as in the promotion of international trade and investment within a sustainable approach;
17. *Affirm* that sustainably managed marine activities including fishing, aquaculture, shipping, ports' development, coastal tourism, maritime sports and cruising are among the main building blocks of a sustainable ocean-based economy and may create sustainable and decent employment and may create sustainable high-value commodities for export;
18. *Affirm* that possible exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil and potential sources of ocean renewable energy, blue biotechnology,

observing systems, all performed in a suitable manner are among the building blocks of ocean conservation and a sustainable ocean-based economy;

19. *Recognize* the need for improved coordination, coherence and convergence of the regional and global initiatives and projects related to blue economy, with the aim of optimising efforts and sharing information;
20. *Recognize* the importance of promoting collaboration and cooperation among our countries, including through a coordinated approach among the relevant regional and international organizations;
21. *Welcome* the efforts to increase international cooperation, including the FAO Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) and its regional components;
22. *Recognise* the need to invest on human capital, improve education, training and scientific capacity and skills development in order to promote the creation of blue jobs;
23. *Emphasize* that mobilizing financing and reducing risk are key to catalysing action for new investments and that scaling up projects may be important to ensure financeable, transparent, accountable and environmentally sustainable investments, namely taking into account respective national and regional circumstances and capabilities, as well as the need to ensure the protection and sustainable management of the ocean and its biodiversity;
24. *Acknowledge* that the full array of resources – public and private, domestic and international, as well as innovative financial approaches are needed to pool and diversify financing for the ocean economy, diversify its finance and reduce the risk and the cost of capital, as well as maintain ecosystem goods and services;
25. *Acknowledge* that empowering relevant stakeholders with the tools, data and information needed to sustainably manage marine resources and to accurately assess risk and opportunities in the ocean economy is key during its early development state, in accordance with sustainable development;
26. *Recognize* that an integrated and innovative global ocean observing system is essential to providing the understanding, services, and decision support tools essential for applying knowledge to achieve the sustainable development goals, safeguard human communities and foster environmental sustainability
27. *Also recognize* the critical nature of combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including through the UN FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, in achieving sustainable fisheries that provide food and livelihoods and support the sustainable management of fisheries, for the conservation of fisheries resources, including the protection of ocean observation networks.