



**UNITED NATIONS
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Statement

by

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UN-Oceans side event

“Fit for purpose? Looking to the future of UN-Oceans”

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, and in my capacity as focal point for UN-Oceans, I have the pleasure of welcoming you all to this side event, which, among others, was facilitated by the generous support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

I also wish to acknowledge the support provided by the International Seabed Authority and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the production of the leaflet about UN-Oceans.

As you may be aware, UN-Oceans is the inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations system and includes the International Seabed Authority.

Bearing in mind the current review of the terms of reference of UN-Oceans by the General Assembly, the members of UN-Oceans are pleased to be able to explore with you how the work of UN-Oceans can be built upon and its modalities of work strengthened with a view to supporting the work of Member States, especially in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 14.

To facilitate a fruitful exchange of views, I have chosen to focus my remarks, albeit briefly, around two main themes identified as key by UN-Oceans members.

Let me begin by highlighting one of UN-Oceans' main achievements, namely the development of an inventory of mandates and activities of participating members, available at the UN-Oceans website, as illustrated on the screen now. Its impact is two-fold. Firstly, the inventory assists UN-Oceans members in identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy, allowing for coordinated responses



to their mandates and priorities. Secondly, the inventory is expected to assist States and relevant stakeholders in identifying the support available from UN-Oceans members towards the implementation of relevant instruments, including the 2030 Agenda. I wish to also take this opportunity to thank the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which hosts the website of UN-Oceans at its expense.

Also noteworthy are the awareness-raising activities carried out by UN-Oceans members, for example, through joint side events and joint statements, in order to call attention to emerging and pressing issues, such as the impacts of climate change on oceans and ocean acidification. These efforts stem from the recognition of the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination to effectively address these issues.

I am pleased to inform you that future awareness-raising activities of UN-Oceans, also registered as a voluntary commitment in the context of the Ocean Conference, will focus on the regulatory framework for oceans and the activities of UN-Oceans members.

This brings me to the question of how UN-Oceans can strengthen its effective contribution to achieving the ocean-related targets in the 2030 Agenda. You will recall the request to the Secretary-General, in the Call for Action, to enhance inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the UN system on ocean issues, *taking into consideration the work of UN-Oceans*. This call embodies, I believe, the increasing expectations from Member States placed on UN-Oceans, including the expectation for prompt and effective action.

Let me first stress that UN-Oceans members are committed to the vision of “delivering as one” and expanding their activities to that end in an integrated and efficient manner. Beyond the coordination of activities and sharing of information, UN-Oceans has great potential. If sufficiently empowered by States to do so, UN-Oceans members acting together, “as one”, could deliver effective assistance to support Member States, in particular developing countries, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and relevant Sustainable Development Goals. This could be done through joint projects and products. In that regard, one noteworthy area that could further benefit from enhanced inter-agency action is capacity-building.

However, in order to allow UN-Oceans to fully deliver on the expectations of Member States in that regard, the strengthening, by the General Assembly, of the UN-Oceans terms of reference as well as sustainable funding would be required. The experience of the other inter-agency coordination mechanisms, namely UN-Water and UN-Energy, could be explored for guidance in addressing funding and other issues.



Secondly, the effective contribution of UN-Oceans also depends on the active involvement therein of all key organizations and bodies of the UN System, including those not currently members, such as the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as on close collaboration with UN-Water and UN-Energy. To this end, it will be important for current non-members to join UN-Oceans.

In closing, I wish to underline the readiness of UN-Oceans to play a more prominent role in advancing the cause of oceans and sustainable development of ocean resources, including through enhancing cooperation and coordination among the activities of its members and by supporting Member States to build capacity and exchange knowledge regarding the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources.

Thank you for your attention.