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**2016 Oceans Meeting
Keynote Address**

by

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**[Consolidated statement- Challenges of the Economy of the Sea – Blue Economy;
Ocean Science Innovation -Ocean culture]**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

[Introduction]

It is a great pleasure for me to be here once again in my home country to share with you some considerations] / [deliver a key note address] on the oceans issues you have chosen to highlight at this Conference.

The momentum on oceans that we all witnessed at the Rio+20 Conference and reflected in “The future we want” has continued and, one may say, culminated in the adoption of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development which includes a stand-alone goal fourteen (14) on oceans.

That goal entitled: “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans and seas and marine resources for sustainable development” provides an important stimulus for addressing the issue of blue economy from the sustainable use perspective and in accordance with international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including through the consideration of all development issues, is now at the forefront of consideration by the international community. It is therefore timely that the present Conference focuses on challenges of the Economy of the Sea and on how best to derive benefits from such economy while keeping the oceans healthy.



In that regard, ocean science and innovation are a prerequisite as well as necessary means of implementation, particularly given to the urgency of addressing also the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification on the oceans. In addition, the development and strengthening of an ocean-oriented culture is vital for underpinning all efforts at achieving sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking for additional sources for growth and prosperity, States are increasingly looking to the oceans to drive economic development. Oceans and seas provide humanity with numerous goods and services, which in turn constitute the basis of employment and livelihoods in diverse economic sectors, thereby driving social-economic growth from the artisanal to the industrial levels.

A number of economic activities are already ocean-based or rely on the use of the ocean space and its resources. Such activities include fishing, marine aquaculture, shipping, shipbuilding, tourism, oil, gas, mining, transportation and international communications industries.

Further to those traditional oceans activities, there is an increasing potential for the expansion of new ones based on the development of new sciences and technologies, such as activities which are associated with renewable energy or deep sea ecosystems. There is growing scientific and commercial interest in exploring new ways of how to derive benefits from the sea.

We thus have witnessed an increase in human activities related to the oceans, in respect to, among other, their biodiversity and biological resources, which include genetic resources, and marine biotechnology.

With regard to the latter in areas beyond national jurisdiction, I would be remiss if I did not mention that conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in those areas are subject of the ongoing discussions within the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292 entitled: Development of international legally binding instrument, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Supporting and enabling scientific work to inform sound decision-making and implementation has become increasingly imperative, particularly to address knowledge gaps in respect of the vast space of the world ocean. In particular, in areas beyond national jurisdiction information on high seas fisheries, vulnerable habitats and ecosystems interactions is often lacking.



At the same time, available information indicates that the oceans and marine environment continue to deteriorate. In the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment, which was issued last year under the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, the experts' findings are alarming. They warn that owing to human activities, the world's oceans are facing major pressures simultaneously with such great cumulative impacts that the carrying capacity of oceans in some cases has been reached.

They conclude that the greatest threat to the oceans comes from a failure to address the manifold problems that are examined in the Assessment. In its 55 chapters, the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment covers more than fifty subjects.

For each of these subjects, such as fisheries, tourism and recreation, marine debris, submarine cables and pipelines and waste disposal, the experts have assessed the current status, including the social and economic aspects and have identified gaps in assessments and in capacity. The Assessment thereby aims to reinforce the science-policy interface by providing a scientific basis for informed decisions on ocean issues by governments and other policy makers and by identifying where more information is needed.

The General Assembly has welcomed with appreciation the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment and approved its Summary. The Assembly has encouraged States and invited relevant intergovernmental organizations to take this important Assessment fully into account as part of various processes. The Assembly also recognized the supporting role of the Assessment in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cumulative impacts of human activities on the oceans underline a sense of urgency when it comes to the need to fully integrate the social and environmental dimensions into the economics of development, as well as the importance of cooperation and coordination.

Member States of the United Nations, including States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, have highlighted that the problems of oceans are closely interrelated and needed to be considered as a whole. This underscores the need for an integrated and cross sectoral approach to the management of oceans issues, at the national, regional and global levels. I would note that the First Global Integrated Assessment, which I referred to earlier, reveals the challenge of a truly integrated approach to managing human activities that have impacts on the marine environment.

Let me recall that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a visionary treaty adopted more than 30 years ago, already covers, in a balanced manner, social, economic and environmental aspects of the development of the riches of the oceans.



With its provisions on maritime delimitations and rights and obligations in the various zones, the Convention provides a strong legal basis and jurisdictional clarity for developing a sustainable ocean-based economy. Effective implementation of the Convention and its Implementing Agreements is therefore, one of the prerequisites for the sustainable development of oceans and seas.

The crucial role of the Convention did not go unnoticed during the negotiation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of the targets of the sustainable development Goal 14 calls for enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as also recalled in “The future we want”.

We already know that, in the years ahead of us, one of the main challenges for the international community, including Member States and the United Nations system, will be the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and all the relevant international instruments Member States are party to, including the Convention as the legal framework for all activities in the oceans. For many developing countries, this challenge will be compounded by issues of capacity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report on oceans and the law of the sea (document A/70/74), the need for integrated approaches is clearly present in capacity requirements as States increasingly seek to harness ocean-based economies in a sustainable manner. These capacity-building requirements are particularly high for all developing States, including land-locked States, and small island developing States.

I would also note that capacity-building requirements of the indigenous people should not be overlooked, bearing in mind that their rights to maintain, control, protect and develop, inter alia, their traditional knowledge and the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including genetic resources, seeds, medicines, and knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, among others, have been recognized by the international community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International cooperation is a fundamental underpinning of the achievement of the goals and other commitments made by States towards the sustainable development of the oceans. The same goes in respect to inter-agency cooperation within the United Nations system. The Secretary-General has already taken important steps to ensure that the support by the system with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for



Sustainable Development is provided in a united and coordinated fashion and fit for purpose.

As you know, there are many specialized agencies of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations which deal directly and indirectly with different aspects of the oceans and their uses, such as, seabed mining, the laying of cables and pipelines and marine scientific research. This requires strengthening and promoting coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to ocean and coastal areas.

This is a challenge for me personally, which I am addressing in my capacity as the Focal point of UN-Oceans, the inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system and of the International Seabed Authority. By facilitating inter-agency information exchange in ocean related matters, the United Nations Secretariat, and specialized agencies continuously work in advancing the vision of Member States of the United Nations, including towards the development of sustainable ocean-based economies.

[Conclusion]

Against this background, it is clear that there is a great deal of workload for all of us on the road towards a sustainable ocean-based economy. However there are also tools, including science and technology, which can assist us in addressing those challenges. Any opportunity, for discussing these challenges and opportunities, like the one provided by the present event, is thus very important and welcome.

Thank you for your attention.