

**Sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal  
Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea**

**(6-10 April 2015)**

**Co-Chairs' summary of discussions**

**Advance, unedited version**

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## **Co-Chairs' summary of discussions<sup>1</sup>**

1. The United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (the "Informal Consultative Process") held its sixteenth meeting from 6 to 10 April 2015 and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/245 of 29 December 2014, focused its discussions on the topic entitled "Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic".

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of 68 States, nine intergovernmental organizations and other bodies and entities, and seven non-governmental organizations.<sup>2</sup>

3. The following supporting documentation was available to the meeting: (a) advance, unedited reporting material on the topic of focus of the sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process; and (b) Format and annotated provisional agenda of the meeting (A/AC.259/L.16).

### **Agenda items 1 and 2**

#### **Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

4. The two Co-Chairs, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) and Don MacKay (New Zealand), appointed by the President of the General Assembly, opened the meeting.

5. Opening remarks were made by Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, United Nations Legal Counsel, and by Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

6. The meeting adopted the Format and annotated provisional agenda and approved the proposed organization of work.

### **Agenda item 3**

#### **General exchange of views**

7. A general exchange of views took place at the plenary meetings on 6 and 9 April on the topic of focus, "Oceans and sustainable development: the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic", as reflected below (paras. 8-34). An information session was held on 7 April (paras. 35-42).

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<sup>1</sup> The summary is intended for reference purposes only and not as a record of the discussions.

<sup>2</sup> A list of participants is available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea at <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm>.

The discussions held on the topic of focus within the Panel segments are reflected in paragraphs 43 to 115 below.

8. Delegations highlighted the critical importance of recognizing the interlinkages between, and integrating, the three dimensions of sustainable development in order to ensure sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Delegations stressed the essential role of oceans in sustainable development, including for poverty eradication, food security, and the creation of sustainable livelihoods. They highlighted the contribution of oceans to various industries, such as fishing, aquaculture, shipping and ship-building, oil and gas exploitation, mining, the laying of submarine cables and tourism, as well as the ecosystem services provided by the oceans, for example, in the production of oxygen, the regulation of the climate system, and the provision of genetic resources for use in various sectors.

9. In that regard, it was noted that oceans and their resources were essential to all States, whether coastal or landlocked. Representatives of small island developing States (SIDS) emphasized the particular importance of oceans for the survival and livelihoods of their people, economies and cultures.

10. Delegations stressed the importance of conserving and sustainably using oceans and seas and their resources and of protecting marine biodiversity and the marine environment for the achievement of sustainable development. Some delegations noted, in that regard, the need to balance economic activities and the protection of the marine environment.

11. Delegations highlighted the importance of international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), recalling that it provided the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas and its implementation was essential for achieving sustainable development given that it had the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions at the core of its provisions. Several delegations also recalled the commitments made in other international documents, including the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want”, and the SAMOA Pathway.

12. Delegations welcomed the timeliness of the topic of focus of the meeting in the light of the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, and expressed appreciation for the advance, unedited reporting material on the topic of focus of the sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process (included in the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, document A/70/74). Many delegations expressed the view that the meeting could contribute to, and allow for greater understanding of, the post-2015 development agenda process, and several delegations suggested that the Co-Chairs’ summary of discussions at the meeting could be brought to the attention of the Co-Facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. With regard to the discussions on oceans in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, several delegations emphasized that UNCLOS was the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

13. Many delegations recalled their support for a stand-alone sustainable development goal (SDG) on oceans, as reflected in Goal 14 of the Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, to “Conserve and sustainably use

the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”.<sup>3</sup> However, several delegations expressed concern that the status of the legal framework set out in UNCLOS had not been properly reflected in SDG 14 (see also para. 39).

14. Several delegations drew attention to the critical importance of addressing means of implementation, in particular transfer of technology and capacity-development. The importance of science-based and measurable goals and targets was highlighted. A view was expressed that levels of development should be taken into account when establishing goals and targets and that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be adhered to.

15. Some delegations expressed the view that further work on the indicators relating to SDG 14 was required. The need for Member States to provide inputs in the development of global indicators was also highlighted by several delegations. Some delegations emphasized the technical work of the United Nations Statistical Commission should take place under supervision of the political negotiating process, in order to avoid the risk of inconsistencies in the overall process. The importance of ensuring a scientific approach to the development of the indicators and creating a mechanism for experts in marine science to provide input was underscored. Some delegations recognized the need for specialist advice, and noted that those organizations with competence in oceans should be called upon to provide such advice. In that regard, the role of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), the expertise of which goes beyond the law of the sea and covers oceans issues in general was highlighted, and some delegations stressed the need for DOALOS to be fully integrated into the process. These delegations requested that the concerns raised by delegations about the process for developing well-functioning indicators for SDG 14 be conveyed to the Co-Facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

16. Some delegations expressed support for the proposal of a delegation to establish an open international process to review effective implementation of SDG 14 on a triennial basis (see para. 41). It was suggested that the Informal Consultative Process could contribute to the review progress in implementing SDG 14 in 2017 or 2018. In that context, it was noted that the sustainable development of oceans, including implementation of SDG 14, should be informed by robust science and knowledge in order to monitor progress and better understand the role of healthy marine ecosystems.

17. A number of delegations provided information on their efforts to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans, including an overview of policies, legislation, activities and initiatives at the national, regional and global levels. In that context, they indicated what they considered to be the main challenges to effective integration, as well as lessons learned and opportunities to advance integration of the three dimensions.

18. In particular, many delegations expressed concern regarding the current pressures on oceans and their resources, in particular overfishing, fisheries subsidies and overcapacity, destructive fishing practices, illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, pollution, coastal runoff, climate change and ocean acidification, and highlighted corresponding challenges hindering sustainable development. These pressures and impacts jeopardized the

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<sup>3</sup> A/68/970.

oceans' ability to provide important ecosystem services, with implications for food security and livelihoods and challenges to local and global economies.

19. Several delegations considered these pressures to be a particular barrier to economic growth and sustainable development for SIDS given their reliance on oceans and their resources. The disproportionate impacts of climate change on developing countries, particularly coastal States and SIDS was also emphasized. In that regard, the importance of restoring the productivity of oceans, including by rebuilding fish stocks, and addressing multiple pressures on critical marine ecosystems, such as coral reefs, with a view to improving their resilience to withstand the impacts of climate change were considered essential. These States also cited unequitable fisheries revenue distribution as a barrier to their sustainable development.

20. Delegations emphasized the implementation of the existing legal framework at the global and regional levels as an important challenge to address in order to achieve sustainable development.

21. Several delegations stressed the need for governance of ocean activities to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development. Attention was drawn to the benefits of integrated maritime policies, and of promoting “blue growth” or a “blue economy” for sustained economic development. In that context, the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy, the 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy, the EU Integrated Maritime Policy, the Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy were referred to, as well as the Antananarivo Communiqué of 5 March 2015. Ongoing international cooperation at the General Assembly towards a legally-binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction was highlighted by some delegations as a necessary step for an integrated approach.

22. It was also observed that adopting an integrated approach to the management of oceans activities would serve as an effective mechanism for the implementation of the SDGs. In that regard, the need to promote the effective integration of the SDGs into national action plans was underlined.

23. Some delegations also pointed out that an integrated approach to the management of ocean activities would limit the cumulative effects of human activities within a defined ocean space and help maintain the health of marine ecosystems. In that regard, a number of delegations stressed the benefits of marine spatial planning, as well as precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches for the conservation, sustainable use and management of marine resources. Tools, such as environmental impact assessments and marine protected areas were also highlighted by many delegations as means to implement an integrated approach. The need for sector-specific measures, such as pollution-reduction measures and measures to address fisheries subsidies, destructive fishing practices, IUU fishing and promote small-scale and artisanal fisheries was also emphasized by several delegations. Many delegations further highlighted the need to address climate change, including through adaptation and mitigation measures, and to also adopt an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and management with a view to enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and communities. It was noted that the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai in March 2015, had underlined the need for action plans on disaster reduction in countries affected by extreme weather events, particularly SIDS.

24. In addition, some delegations pointed out that the value of marine ecosystem services needed to be visible and included in national accounting, business development and community planning.

25. The importance of maritime boundary delimitation was also underscored by several delegations in the context of resource exploitation for economic benefits, sustainable management of living and non-living resources, as well as in increasing effective maritime surveillance and security.

26. Delegations further stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination at all levels and across sectors for an integrated approach to the management of ocean activities. Several delegations highlighted the need to make use of existing organizations and mechanisms, including at the regional level, to ensure coordination across and between the range of ocean stakeholders. The coordination taking place through UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on oceans and coastal issues within the United Nations system, was noted.

27. A view was expressed that decision-making with regard to management measures on a regional basis was a sound approach, given that capacities, levels of knowledge and priorities varied from region to region. It was also observed that regional cooperation was an important mechanism for a holistic and coordinated management of ocean resources, with some examples including the Coral Triangle Initiative and the Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security initiative. Some delegations stressed the need for cooperation on issues of common interest between regional organisations with different mandates, including regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and regional seas programmes, as they considered it vital for integrated management of ocean activities.

28. Several delegations expressed the view that lack of capacity was one of the principal obstacles to advancing sustainable development. In particular, there was a call for increased marine scientific research and scientific capacity to improve knowledge in support of decision-making and sustainable management. There was also a need to enhance the sharing of scientific knowledge and experience as well as technology transfer. Strengthening the science-policy interface was also considered necessary.

29. The need for human resources and institutional development was also highlighted as a necessary prerequisite to deriving benefits from the oceans and achieving sustainability.

30. Several delegations drew attention to the need to build the capacity to exercise the rights and comply with the obligations set out in UNCLOS. The need for technical assistance with regard to the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles as a basis for economic and social development was highlighted.

31. The importance of enhancing the capacity of developing States to monitor and control activities in their waters, including fisheries, was stressed, as was the importance of protecting small-scale fisheries.

32. Several delegations called for specific support for SIDS in adopting measures adapted to their unique vulnerabilities, including support for sustainable fisheries by improving the regime for monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing vessels to effectively prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. Increasing international assistance in monitoring, predicting and

identifying coral bleaching and improving strategies to manage reefs to support their natural resilience was also considered critical by several delegations.

33. A delegation also drew attention to the particular vulnerabilities faced by land-locked States, including in the context of climate change. It was noted that, in light of these vulnerabilities and given the interdependence of States, effective cooperation agreements with States that have access to the sea were essential in order to facilitate transit for imports and exports of goods and access to resources by land-locked countries.

34. The importance of partnerships as a means of building capacity was highlighted by several delegations. In that regard, several other delegations called for sustainable and durable partnerships to enhance their ability to harvest the resources in their exclusive economic zones (EEZs).

### **Information session**

35. Mr. David Donoghue, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations and Co-Facilitator for the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, briefed delegations on progress in that process. He noted the growing importance of oceans in the discussions leading to the post-2015 development agenda, including the support for the inclusion of oceans as one of the themes of the interactive dialogues of the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda to be held from 25 to 27 September 2015. He described the ongoing process related to the post-2015 development agenda, including the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations, as well as related, inter-linked processes such as the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13 to 16 July 2015.

36. He informed that indicators to measure achievement of the goals and targets were being developed in the context of the United Nations Statistical Commission and a first draft had been discussed during the last session of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda in March 2015. It was envisaged that a set of indicators would be finalized by March 2016. The technical work on the indicators would be carried out by the UN Statistical Commission, aided by major stakeholders, including national statistical offices, civil society, and academic inputs.

37. He concluded by stressing that further work was needed on: arrangements for follow-up and review of the agenda; proposed themes for the interactive dialogues during the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda; and on the draft declaration.

38. In the ensuing discussions, it was noted that the sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process would facilitate discussions on oceans in the context of the post-2015 development agenda process. Several delegations expressed support for the inclusion of oceans as one of the themes for the interactive dialogues at the United Nations Summit.

39. Delegations stated that the outcome of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals should form the basis of the post-2015 development agenda, and several delegations emphasized the importance of a stand-alone goal on oceans in that agenda, as reflected in SDG 14. Several delegations noted, however, that the targets in SDG 14, in particular 14.c, should be consistent with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, and

aligned with the language agreed upon in previous General Assembly resolutions and the outcome documents of sustainable development summits and conferences. Several delegations also noted that some of the targets lacked elements already reflected in the outcome of previous summits and conferences, including “The future we want”. In that context, delegations reaffirmed that UNCLOS set out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, and that it provided the basis for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources. A delegation also expressed concern with the wording of target 14.6. It was also noted by a delegation that the proposed provisional indicators for SDG 14 did not address the important target on IUU fishing.

40. With regard to indicators, views were expressed that they should be policy-relevant, ambitious, transparent and of high quality, they should measure actions and the impact of those actions towards accomplishing the goals and be consistent with existing international standards. A delegation expressed its concern that not all States would be able to track progress on the basis of all indicators discussed so far.

41. A delegation highlighted the importance of ensuring the effective implementation of SDG 14, and of devising a process to that end. In that regard, it made reference to ongoing consultations on a proposal for triennial meetings to specifically monitor the implementation and progress towards achieving SDG 14.

**Area of focus: oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic**

42. In accordance with the Format and annotated provisional agenda, the discussion panel on the topic of focus was organized in two panel segments structured around: (a) the environmental, social and economic dimensions of oceans and progress made in integrating the three dimensions, including an overview of activities and initiatives promoting their integration; and (b) opportunities for, and challenges to, the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans. The segments were launched by presentations from panellists, followed by interactive discussions (see <[un.org/Depts/los/consultative\\_process/consultative\\_process.htm](http://un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm)>).

**1. The environmental, social and economic dimensions of oceans and progress made in integrating the three dimensions, including an overview of activities and initiatives promoting their integration**

**(a) Panel presentations**

43. In segment 1, Elliot Harris, Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) New York Office, described how the utilization of an ecosystem approach to protect the marine environment could further the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. He highlighted the strategic directions formulated by regional seas conventions and action plans (RSCAPs) to effectively apply an ecosystem approach in the management of marine and coastal environments and the development of indicators to measure progress and success to that end. Referring to indicators under development in the context of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, he noted that such indicators could contribute to monitoring progress towards the achievement of the relevant targets under SDG 14.

44. Brandt Wagner, Head of the Transport and Maritime Unit of the Sectoral Policies Department, International Labour Organization (ILO), provided an ILO perspective on the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. He highlighted how ILO Conventions, UNCLOS and other instruments, addressed the conditions of work of seafarers and fishers, which constituted an important element of the social dimension of oceans. In this regard, he noted the lack of participation in some of the legal instruments addressing the social dimension as a challenge to overcome. Reference was made to the work of ILO to address forced labour for migrant fishers. He observed that the ILO's maritime work intersected with various organizations and partners, and stressed the importance of inter-agency cooperation and coordination at all levels, including through UN-Oceans.

45. Paul Holthus, founding Chief Executive Officer of the World Ocean Council, addressed the economic dimension of sustainable development, drawing attention to the important contribution of the oceans to the global economy and highlighting the wide range of ocean activities undertaken and services provided by the ocean business community, which generate trillions of dollars in revenues. He noted how the increasing number of uses of the oceans and regulations, as well as the growing trend towards an integrated management of ocean activities, provided a gradually more complex and challenging business environment for ocean industries. In this regard, he underscored the importance of industry involvement in ocean-policy discussions.

46. Lisa Emelia Svensson, Ambassador for Oceans, Seas and Fresh Water, Sweden, highlighted the link between healthy oceans, a healthy planet and healthy people. "It is important that we consider the increasing pressures facing the oceans, including as a result of population growth and climate change, and the importance of implementing an integrated approach to the management of maritime spaces and of developing a blue economy", said Ambassador Svensson. In this regard, she referred to the Baltic Sea as an example of good practices in knowledge sharing with lessons learned in the implementation of marine spatial planning. She underscored the importance of data, broad stakeholder involvement and partnerships, as well as opportunities and challenges related to ecosystems services mapping and valuation.

47. Sebastian Mathew, Executive Secretary, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, highlighted the important role played by small-scale fisheries for the sustainable development of coastal communities. He proposed a human rights-based approach in small-scale fisheries which could empower small-scale fishing communities to participate in decision-making processes, benefit vulnerable and marginalized groups in developing countries, address discrimination against women as well as forced labour and child labour in fisheries, and protect the rights of migrant fishers and fish workers. Adopting a human-rights based approach could further enhance social benefits, and bring greater visibility to the contribution of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities to both local and global food security and social development as well as poverty eradication.

48. Simon Bennett, International Chamber of Shipping, discussed how shipping contributed to the three dimensions of sustainable development. With regard to environmental sustainability, he highlighted the projected investment that ship owners and operators will have to make in the near future in order to meet their obligations in regard to CO<sub>2</sub> and sulphur emissions reductions, as well as ballast water management systems. Noting that shipping was a driver for "green growth", he argued for the adoption of a cost-benefit

analysis prior to developing future regulations that may impact the shipping industry. With respect to social sustainability, he highlighted the contribution of shipping to employment and noted that shipping was the only industrial sector with a comprehensive international framework in place addressing decent employment standards following the entry into force of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention.

49. David Osborn, Director of the Environment Laboratories, International Atomic Energy Agency, addressed the integration of the environmental, social and economic dimensions as they relate to ocean acidification. He underlined that changes in ocean acidity were occurring about 100 times faster than at any time in the last 20 million years with consequent deleterious environmental, social and economic effects. He explained how innovative governance tools, legislative reforms, diversification of incomes, increased awareness and knowledge at all levels, including the promotion of scientific understanding, could help limit the source of ocean acidification, reduce its impacts and protect coastal environments and communities. He noted that while adaptation action could buy time, mitigation of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions was an integral part of the solution.

50. Douglas Burnett, International Law Advisor at the International Cable Protection Committee, highlighted the importance of fibre optic submarine cables for global communication and economic development, and in providing the underlying platform for scientific and technological cooperation. He noted that peer-review studies had shown that the impacts of submarine cables on the marine environment were from neutral to benign. Noting that UNCLOS provided an appropriate legal framework for the protection of cables, he encouraged implementation of its provisions through national legislation, since few States had enacted such legislation.

51. Lorna Inness, Acting Director of the Coastal Zone Management Unit, Barbados, highlighted the role of science for SIDS coastal tourism, noting the threat posed by the tourism industry to areas that are vulnerable to intense coastal hazards, including erosion. She explained how the integration of conservation, regulation and stabilization, based on sound science could assist in the sustainable management of coasts, and in reducing human-induced impacts on coastal resources. She also emphasized that assessments every five years under the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process), could provide States with a valuable tool to evaluate the progress made in the sustainable development of the oceans and their resources.

#### **(b) Panel discussions**

52. Several delegations expressed concern regarding the effects of ocean acidification and the vulnerability of communities to its impacts.

53. In response to a question as to how ocean acidification could be included in the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris, France from 30 November to 11 December 2015, Mr. Osborn emphasized the need to include oceans in mitigation targets and adaptation measures. He also observed that the current emphasis on a two degree Celsius warming target did not take into account the impact of ocean acidification, which would occur irrespective of warming. In response to a question regarding whether some areas were more at risk to ocean acidification, Mr. Osborn further explained that areas most at risk would be those with

limited capacity to adapt and respond because of their economic dependence on affected species or ecosystems. In addition, some marine areas and ecosystems were more vulnerable to ocean acidification because of the cumulative effects of other impacts. For example, coral reefs in some areas in the mid-Pacific had remained robust despite high levels of acidity due to the low level of pollution and absence of overfishing. A delegation also cited available national data that indicated that the good condition and resilience of corals in some areas under its jurisdiction resulted from the diversity of fish, which had decreased the growth of algae in bleached coral areas. Massive coral reef destruction within their region therefore impacted areas within national jurisdiction. Mr. Osborn recommended reducing land-based run offs, fishing pressures and the introduction of invasive alien species, highlighting the need for increased global cooperation and international policy response in that regard.

54. Mr. Osborn emphasized that while ocean acidification presented real risks and challenges, there were also opportunities for growth. He noted that investing in science would increase understanding of the impacts of ocean acidification on a local scale, and increase the capacity of a country to adapt. He further stressed the need to understand impacts in an integrated manner, because an environmental impact, for example on food webs affecting whale populations, could then generate an economic impact, for example on whale watching businesses.

55. Addressing a question on the impact of coastal hazards on fisheries, Ms. Inniss noted that nearshore small-scale fisheries were severely impacted, and this was linked to the degradation of coral reefs due to erosion and larger waves reaching the shores, causing small-scale fisheries to move further offshore. In this regard, in order to support the livelihoods of fishers, national consultations to incorporate fishers in development policies were ongoing with a view to enhancing cooperation and avoiding potential conflict among stakeholders.

56. Highlighting the importance of protecting small-scale fisheries, some delegations stressed the need to address the issue of marginalization, where fishers, because of the development of tourism, were increasingly being pushed into more hazardous locations. In that regard, a delegation noted the difficulties of demonstrating the value of small-scale fisheries, making it difficult to make a case for allocation of resources to address the issue. Mr. Mathew emphasized the necessity of recognizing that many small-scale fishers used low-impact gear, which helped meet obligations under international instruments. He also stressed the need to recognize the cultural value of small-scale fisheries, for example for indigenous communities.

57. With regard to the role of market States in addressing abusive practices and labour conditions at sea, Mr. Wagner noted that market forces such as the purchasing policies of governments and consumer preferences based on labour practices could have an impact. He also drew attention to the difficulty of gathering information on the conditions of fishers involved in IUU fishing. The ILO therefore often relied on its social partners to gather such information and supported broad inter-agency cooperation.

58. Addressing a question on the shipping industry's position regarding proposals to establish marine protected areas in the high seas, Mr. Bennett noted that the issue was new for the shipping industry, and that it was necessary to have its full involvement, including through the International Maritime Organization and the International Chamber of Shipping, as well as to take into account existing rights under international instruments. The need to

reach a balance between the freedom of the high seas and the protection of the marine environment, including through marine protected areas, was highlighted by a delegation.

59. In response to a question raised on how increased costs of complying with environmental regulations would affect the volume of goods shipped worldwide, Mr. Bennett explained that such costs would ideally be borne by consumers but this had not been the case as there were too many ships and too few cargoes. He further emphasized that some measures while intended to reduce emissions could increase them, for example, by driving demand to other less-carbon efficient modes of transportation.

60. Noting that communication and economies depended on the utilization and protection of submarine cables, a delegation expressed concern that the necessary laws and regulations to protect them were still lacking. Addressing the issue of the adequacy of the current legal framework, Mr. Burnett noted that one of the biggest problems was that many States had not complied with requirements under UNCLOS to implement domestic legislation, with the vast majority of States having no domestic legislation or outdated legislation. He also drew attention to the need for a legal basis to prosecute terrorists that target submarine cables. He noted good cooperation between the cable and fishing industries, which had been effective at reducing risk of entanglements.

61. Delegations discussed the role of governments in promoting integration and how a planning framework could provide for dynamic management to take into account new uses of the oceans and changing conditions. Ms. Svensson and Mr. Holthus noted that creating dynamism required being forward-thinking and developing projections of use and non-use values as well as different scenarios for the future. Mr. Holthus further noted the concern the business community would have with a top-down rigid legislative framework.

62. With regard to marine spatial planning, a delegation noted that its implementation required a coherent, inclusive and transparent process, involving the private sector and scientists. Several delegations raised the question whether a legal framework was needed to implement marine spatial planning beyond the territorial sea. In that regard, Ms. Svensson observed that, in the case of the Baltic Sea, which was covered by the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, cooperation towards marine spatial planning took place through a joint working group and was primarily based on a shared interest in the health of the Baltic Sea rather than a legal framework.

63. Delegations stressed the importance of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation and sought input on how to develop coordination among industry, civil society and governments. A delegation noted that civil society and industry sometimes had different perspectives on environmental issues. However, Mr. Holthus observed that one point of common ground between governments, civil society and industry was the need for sound science. It was important to ensure that the global business community was informed regarding policy initiatives in order to ensure buy-in. Ms. Svensson and Mr. Holthus also observed that, in order to secure the participation of the private sector, it was important to present the positive opportunities which could result from engagement, and identify industry leaders with an interest in ocean issues. In response to a question regarding how to get the business community from small and medium-sized companies, but with a potential for having a major impact on oceans, involved in ocean policy discussions, Mr. Holthus noted that the most important factor was for industries of any size to work together.

64. The need for scientific data on which to base policy-making, in particular in areas such as the Arctic and Antarctic, where climate change was altering usage patterns, was underlined. Advice was sought for SIDS wanting to implement marine spatial planning, consider the valuation of ecosystem services and bring the private sector on-board given the cost of sound science, which could bankrupt SIDS, and the difficulty of getting economists familiar with such tools as valuation of ecosystems services. Ms. Svensson expressed the view that part of the problem was limited communication within the scientific community. In addition, while there might be sufficient science available, it was also necessary to make it policy-relevant. She drew attention to the benefits of engaging local communities in mapping and valuing ecosystem services and presenting valuation as an investment rather than a cost.

65. A delegation enquired whether programmes existed to strengthen cooperation among scientists, due to the importance of sharing information and good practices in addressing oceans issues. It was noted that collaboration among scientists was ongoing, including through the Regular Process. Furthermore, DOALOS and IOC were jointly developing a training programme on marine scientific research. The OceanTeacher Global Academy, a training programme implemented by IOC to develop regional capacities in ocean science, observation, data collection, monitoring, and the mitigation of coastal hazards, was also highlighted.

66. A question was raised about what a cross-cutting approach to the targets included under SDG 14 would entail. In this respect, Mr. Holthus expressed the view that the targets under SDG 14 were sufficiently broad to be relevant to many sectors and cross-cutting. The issue, he noted, was that while some were specific in scope, others were more broadly drafted, making them more difficult for industry to operationalize or implement. In that regard, it was considered important for all stakeholders to work together for effective implementation. In response, a delegation noted that some targets might be deliberately ambiguous but that cooperation with multiple stakeholders, including industry, could be taken into account at the level of implementation.

67. Some delegations referred to the experience of the RSCAPs in developing indicators. Mr. Harris explained that technical experts within the RSCAPs had made recommendations but that indicators had been agreed upon by States. He also clarified that the process might have varied across regions based on different levels of capacities and the methodologies employed. In response to questions regarding the possible use of regional indicators in the context of the SDGs, he noted that each region had different characteristics and methodologies, and a regional approach could thus be useful and also bring about economies of scale.

68. With respect to indicators to assess progress in relation to small-scale fisheries, Mr. Mathew advanced that information about traditional institutions and cooperatives for fishers and fish workers, level of participatory processes in decision-making, and cooperative arrangements and devolution of power to a community could be useful indicators.

## **2. Opportunities for, and challenges to, the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans**

### **(a) Panel presentations**

69. In segment 2, Andrew Hudson, Head of the Water & Ocean Governance Programme, United Nations Development Programme, highlighted the importance of restoring the oceans as an engine for sustainable economic development, job creation and poverty reduction, by addressing such pressures as overfishing, invasive species, pollution (especially nutrients and plastics) and ocean acidification. He explained that reducing or removing the market and/or policy failures that caused these pressures could result in substantial environmental improvements, as well as job growth and overall socioeconomic development.

70. Robin Mahon, Professor Emeritus, University of the West Indies, focused on the implications of the regional-global governance nexus for sustainability through the example of the Wider Caribbean. He highlighted the problem of fragmentation in governance of ocean activities as a major impediment to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and described the benefits of establishing a framework for the governance of ocean activities as a single global architecture or network comprising global - regional subnetworks for various sectors and crosscutting regional subnetworks. He noted that successful implementation will depend on effective linkages between global and regional subnetworks for various sectors and cross-cutting regional subnetworks.

71. Transform Aqorau, Chief Executive Officer of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office, described the experience of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement in reshaping fisheries management in the Pacific. He emphasized the potential benefits for coastal States of taking greater ownership of the development of their fisheries. He noted that the development of alternative innovative arrangements for the allocation of fishing rights, such as replacing the licensing of fishing opportunities to foreign fishing companies with rights-based schemes, could empower developing countries, create strong market-based incentives and jobs, and promote innovation and strategic partnerships. He noted, however, that many challenges existed to implementing such an innovative approach, including within existing RFMOs. He highlighted the need for policy coherence on the part of donor countries in support of sustainable fisheries in developing countries.

72. Wanfei Qiu, Research Associate, China Institute for Marine Affairs, provided an overview of the efforts in China to promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, including through its national ocean policy, laws and regulations. She also described the evolution in the use of tools and initiatives, such as marine protected areas, the restoration of coastal habitats, the promotion of “blue economy” initiatives nationally and internationally and alternative livelihood programmes for fishers. She also highlighted a number of challenges for the sustainable development of the oceans, including the need to better balance the economic dimension with the environmental and social dimensions, since the promotion of economic growth, while it had helped alleviate poverty for millions of people, had also resulted in major environmental problems.

73. Rémi Parmentier, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Global Ocean Commission, addressed the issue of indicators in relation to the sustainable development of oceans and seas

based on recent work done by that Commission. In particular, he highlighted the proposals of the Commission illustrating policy-relevant and action-oriented indicators for the targets associated with SDG 14. He expressed the view that the list of indicators for SDGs proposed by the United Nations Statistical Commission was preliminary. He stated that further work was required, including with the input of the larger ocean community, to make the indicators stronger, more practical, policy-relevant and action-oriented. He also referred to a proposal of the Global Ocean Commission to create an independent ocean accountability board to benchmark progress on ocean conservation.

74. Biliانا Cicin-Sain, Director of the Gerard J. Mangone Center for Marine Policy and President of the Global Ocean Forum, spoke on the topic of enabling factors in achieving sustainable development of oceans based on a review of experiences with national and regional ocean policies. She underscored the importance of enabling factors, such as the legal framework, policies, marine science, infrastructure, including technology and technology transfer, capacity-building and resource mobilization, cooperation and coordination, and systems for measuring progress. She illustrated how 15 States and four regions had moved towards integrated governance of ocean activities, and highlighted success factors, such as common principles, formal coordination of institutions, political support and binding policies, enabling stakeholders and ensuring adequate funding.

75. Helena Motta, Leader for the marine action plan on small-scale fisheries and aquaculture within the Global Marine Programme of WWF, highlighted challenges to the management and governance of small-scale fisheries in developing countries with a focus on Africa, including the need for equitable access, tenure rights and sustainable fisheries. Noting that small-scale fisheries were characterized by poor governance, lack of empowerment and habitat destruction among other things, she highlighted the activities undertaken in Mozambique to address these issues, including monitoring of fisheries and diversification of species fished, data collection, participatory decision-making and co-management by fishers and the challenges encountered. She observed that these experiences had had mixed results.

76. Vasco Becker-Weinberg, Legal Adviser to the Secretary of State of the Sea of Portugal, provided an overview of the work and experience of Portugal in elaborating legislation on marine spatial planning and management of its areas within national jurisdiction, specifically with regard to integrating the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. He described the process leading to the development of the law, the requirements of consultations with stakeholders, the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in decision-making by authorities, inter-agency cooperation and coordination, the consideration of the legal status of different maritime zones, as well as other salient features of the law.

77. Silvia Velo, Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy, addressed the issue of marine protected areas and sustainable development in the Mediterranean, including as a possible approach for the sustainable development and “blue growth” of SIDS, which shared some of the same vulnerabilities, challenges and opportunities. She noted that the establishment of a network of MPAs and the development of sustainable “blue growth”, based on the EU Blue Growth Strategy, were priorities for the region. She observed that strategic planning and local involvement were critical to any success, as was good governance that ensured a balanced integration of the environmental, social and economic dimensions.

78. Kwame Koranteng, Coordinator of the EAF-Nansen Project at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, focused on measures to strengthen the knowledge base for sustainable development in fisheries. He described how the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) incorporated the three dimensions of sustainable development, and described the history, structure and objectives of FAO's EAF-Nansen Project, as well as the results achieved through the Project, in terms of developing EAF management, developing capacity and collecting data. He noted the need for a well-functioning fisheries administration to have regular processes in place to monitor the extent to which the fishery moved towards desirable objectives, as well as the human and financial resources necessary to follow up on agreed management actions.

79. Julian Barbière, Head of the Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section at the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, addressed the need for marine science and the transfer of marine technology. He expressed concern over the gap in scientific capacity among countries which could be addressed by identifying regional and subregional focal points and the transfer of marine technology. He described the IOC Criteria and Guidelines on Transfer of Marine Technology and the potential for a clearing house mechanism. He also highlighted the development of a global ocean science report that would assess capacity needs and opportunities in ocean science and the establishment of the OceanTeacher Global Academy to provide training courses related to IOC programmes worldwide.

80. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, Senior Nutrition Scientist at World Fish, explained that many low income countries would not be able to achieve optimal levels of capacity-building without strategic regional collaborations and partnerships, drawing on examples in particular from Bangladesh. She underlined that capacity-building with enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development required a people-centered, community approach, based on human rights, equity and good governance at all levels, and the involvement of a range of stakeholders from different sectors. She emphasized that a long-term, sustained effect of capacity-building required a focus on educating youth. She noted that the use of new technology, such as cell phones, had transformed access to knowledge, creating growing awareness in communities.

81. Nicole Glineur, Senior Environmental Specialist at the Global Environment Facility (GEF), described the activities of the GEF in supporting the sustainable management of ocean activities, including the International Waters Programme, the Global Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Programme and the Large Marine Ecosystems projects. She elaborated on the role of resource mobilization in supporting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and provided some examples of how the three pillars had been integrated into GEF-financed initiatives.

#### **(b) Panel discussions**

82. The benefits of restoring and protecting ocean ecosystems as a major driver for job growth and overall socioeconomic development across multiple sectors in various oceans-related industries were highlighted. Mr. Hudson noted the challenges and high costs in regulating activities that were largely land-based, but also described the new business opportunities for innovators. In particular, he described the potential for a new technology industry in ballast water treatment and explained that, while ship companies would need to

invest in ballast water systems, there were clear opportunities for emerging companies, growth in research and development and job creation. A delegation highlighted in this regard the value of a “blue economy” in driving economic growth and environmental protection.

83. With regard to fisheries, noting the efforts of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) to restrict access to fisheries in their EEZs, a delegation inquired whether this had had a positive impact on the tuna fishery in the Pacific. Another delegation emphasized the importance of the conservation of tuna stocks in the Pacific and of cooperation among States in the region and in RFMOs in order to achieve the sustainable development of tuna fisheries, including by supporting initiatives to combat IUU fishing. In this context, Mr. Aqorau described the history of the tuna fishery in the Pacific, in which prohibiting fishing in high seas pockets was made a condition for access to the fishery resources in the EEZs of the adjacent coastal States, as well as the resulting economic benefits to coastal developing States. He noted the applicability of such schemes to other fisheries, but also highlighted the need for regional support and political will in the development of the governance framework, as well as in addressing challenges in fisheries management, such as ensuring compliance with agreed limits on access to fishery resources. He also described the need for effective monitoring, control and surveillance to ensure States did not exceed fishing limits, including through the use of electronic reporting and independent audits. Mr. Aqorau further described dysfunctions in the decision-making architecture of RFMOs, which had led to declines in the status of stocks. He provided examples of RFMOs in which the parties had ignored scientific advice or been unwilling to take measures to achieve the conservation of the fishery resources.

84. Some delegations requested clarification on the challenges of instituting market-based arrangements, such as rights-based schemes, as well as the key characteristics of such schemes and their possible application in other regions. Mr. Aqorau described challenges in obtaining support for rights-based fisheries from market States. In the case of the PNA, he stressed that only those countries that supported arrangements to shift rights to coastal States would enjoy the benefits of having access to the resources of the PNA countries. He observed that the success of the arrangement could be attributed in part to the financing generated by the scheme, which allowed for policy decisions to be made independently from donor objectives. The need for institutional support, as well as assistance with science and data gathering was stressed. Mr. Aqorau further noted the benefits for developing coastal States of innovative approaches to the processing and marketing of fishery products, such as contract processing and fisheries certification. He also described the development benefits from innovative approaches in fisheries, such as allowing developing States to hold interests in foreign processing facilities, which could become part of their domestic economy.

85. Mr. Aqorau said closing off the high seas to commercial fishing could allow developing countries to supply all the raw materials and fish products for developed countries. Such an arrangement would allow developing States to become fully integrated into the world trading system and for progress in achieving SDGs. A delegation noted that such proposals raised delicate issues for many States due to the importance of fisheries for economic development. Problems of overcapitalization of fishing fleets, following the establishment of EEZs, which had led to overfishing, as well as difficulties in access to fishery resources within the regulatory areas of RFMOs were highlighted. These issues were complex and there were ongoing efforts to address those related to fishing subsidies in the World Trade Organization.

86. The discussion of the need for effective governance of small-scale fisheries was welcomed as timely by some delegations which expressed concern over the disadvantaged position of small-scale and artisanal fishers in most countries, as well as the challenges to their being stronger participants in, and beneficiaries of, sustainable development efforts. In particular, the challenges posed by conflicts between small-scale fishers and fishers with larger capacity and with industrial fisheries were noted. Further information was sought on what actions had been taken in Africa to successfully resolve such conflicts. Ms. Motta observed that small-scale fishers were not considered to be major contributors to the gross domestic product, had a very low level of participation in decision-making and were not well represented. These being the case, other fishers with stronger representation were able to fish, without any restriction, in areas that were predominantly used by small-scale fishers, thereby depriving them of benefits and livelihoods. Also, the increase in oil and gas exploration and other extractive industries, which seemed to be prioritized over other development activities, as well as boundary issues and migration to coastal areas, had resulted in diluting customary rights of small-scale and artisanal fishers and displacement without alternatives. In order to resolve this, she stressed that spatial planning and enforcement, together with the granting of exclusive tenure rights, strengthening the participation of small-scale fishers in decision-making and increased political will were crucial.

87. In this regard, a delegation observed the need for customary or traditional fishing rights to be supported by governments through legal means or by-laws and customary tenure, such as in the Pacific region.

88. The opportunity for building more holistic governance of ocean activities at global and regional levels was stressed. Examples were provided of transboundary cooperation, including the Coral Triangle Initiative and the establishment of transboundary MPAs based on the migratory patterns of marine turtles. Ms. Qiu stressed the importance of such transboundary cooperation, given the interconnected nature of marine ecosystems. Mr. Mahon highlighted the need to identify existing platforms that had the scale and geographical scope to address such issues, as was done in the case of the Wider Caribbean Regional Ocean Governance Framework. Noting that transboundary cooperation was also essential from a scientific point of view, Ms. Qiu highlighted the APEC Marine Sustainable Development Report as a way to improve collaboration among regional scientists.

89. Fragmentation in governance of ocean activities was identified by Mr. Mahon as an impediment to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. With specific reference to conservation and sustainable use in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the view was expressed that proposals on the need for governance mechanisms and policy coherence to address the issue of fragmentation had to be legitimate to be successful. The importance of preserving the delicate balance achieved in UNCLOS was underscored in that regard.

90. Consideration was given to the issue of the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development through integrated national ocean policies. A delegation noted that, in the wider Caribbean region, only four out of thirty countries had an ocean policy at the national level, which resulted in an inherent difficulty to elaborate a regional ocean policy. With regard to the modalities for the development of national policies, Ms. Cicin-Sain noted the establishment of high-level inter-agency committees in various countries.

91. In response to a query on how to balance short-term priorities and long-term goals, Ms. Cicin-Sain referred to the example of the United States of America, where similar executive actions were continuously implemented since 2004 despite changes in government. Mr. Becker-Weinberg noted that the law on marine spatial planning in Portugal ensured continuity in case of changes in government, and incorporated a monitoring mechanism which required a report from government to parliament every three years to determine, inter alia, what actions were being undertaken and whether targets, goals and deadlines were being met.

92. Delegations discussed the importance of consultations at the national and regional level in the development of integrated policies and spatial plans. Addressing the modalities of consultations, Mr. Becker-Weinberg noted that stakeholders consultations in Portugal had involved both technical experts and political authorities. He further explained that the base law on marine spatial planning was drafted by government following inter-departmental technical discussions and adopted by the parliament, following public hearings involving a wide cross-section of stakeholders.

93. With regard to consultations at the regional level, including in developing MPAs and sharing limited resources for sustainable development, Ms. Velo noted that the Mediterranean was vulnerable but that the surrounding coastal States had adopted a number of instruments to facilitate sustainable use and management of this shared resource. In this regard, a European Union Directive on marine spatial planning and a European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive to achieve a good environmental status of the sea by 2020, both of which were based on participation among different levels of governments and the inclusion of other stakeholders such as local communities, were highlighted. A third instrument was the tri-lateral 1999 declaration on the Pelagos Sanctuary for the conservation of Mediterranean marine mammals. Reference was also made by several delegations to the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean.

94. Several delegations welcomed the information regarding the process of developing and applying marine spatial planning to the conservation and sustainable use and governance of ocean activities. With regard to whether there was or should be a model scale of priority, in order to determine whether certain issues or uses should take precedence over others, or whether the scale could be adapted to suit each case or circumstance, Mr. Becker-Weinberg noted that this depended on how marine spatial planning was perceived by individual States. By way of example, he observed that, in Portugal, a mechanism for resolving conflicts concerning competing uses of the oceans had been developed which took into account the specificities associated with the use of marine space for economic and development activities. In this regard, it was noted that the overriding consideration was that an activity would only be supported if it was deemed to be environmentally sustainable, following which other economic and social criteria would be considered such as the potential for job creation, which was a national priority for Portugal. Thus, any mechanism of prioritization would need to depend on national priorities for development.

95. Several delegations noted a shift from integrated coastal management to marine spatial planning for integrated coastal governance, and queried whether the current international legal framework was adequate for marine spatial planning or integrated governance. Ms. Cicin-Sain noted that the integrated approach in the context of EEZ management was new and it was too early to determine if there was a gap. Regarding areas

beyond national jurisdiction, she noted that similar to experiences in areas under national jurisdiction, cooperation between regional seas programmes and RFMOs remained limited and area-based management in such areas would be a challenge, since there existed no authority to establish such areas. It was noted that this was an issue subject to forthcoming negotiations on a legally-binding agreement under UNCLOS regarding the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

96. A question was raised regarding how to bridge the gap between measures taken at global and local levels and what an appropriate balance might be between global top-down and local bottom-up approaches. In response, Mr. Barbière noted that measures at the regional level, for example, through IOC regional centres or RSCAPs, could play a role in bridging that gap. A point was made that integrated and cross-sectoral management should not be seen as a replacement for good sectoral management.

97. With regard to enabling measures, a delegation noted that transfer of marine technology was at the core of Part XIV of UNCLOS, which that delegation considered to be the least developed Part in terms of compliance, to the detriment of developing States. In this regard, Mr. Barbière indicated that the work of IOC on this issue was aimed at operationalizing the relevant provisions of UNCLOS. The benefits of taking into account the clearinghouse mechanism and fund for the transfer of marine technology in the work towards the implementation of the SDGs were highlighted.

98. The view was expressed by a delegation that in accordance with Part XIII of UNCLOS, all scientific research activities in the oceans constituted marine scientific research.

99. A delegation noted the upcoming release of the first global integrated marine assessment under the Regular Process, and suggested that the IOC consider the relevant portions of that assessment on capacity-building needs in the preparation of its global ocean science report.

100. In response to clarifications sought on the work of IOC on taxonomy in areas beyond national jurisdiction, Mr. Barbière noted that the Ocean Biogeographic Information System was the largest repository of information of scientific knowledge on the oceans, including both areas beyond and within national jurisdiction. He also clarified that IOC was working with the International Seabed Authority to see how taxonomy information on areas beyond national jurisdiction could benefit the Authority's work. A question was also raised regarding the compatibility of GEF's programmes covering areas beyond national jurisdiction with the work currently underway in the context of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. In this regard, it was clarified by Ms. Glineur that GEF was working with RFMOs on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks under existing legal instruments, including the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and FAO instruments, and that the projects in question aimed at applying tools and not developing legal instruments.

101. In response to a question regarding the collection of data under the EAF/Nansen Project, Mr. Koranteng clarified that a broad database of information had been compiled. The data in the database belonged to the State in which it was gathered, but access could be given to others with the consent of the coastal State concerned. A new data policy of the Project

would now make the data public after five years unless the rights-holder objected. The focus of the Nansen Project's activities had evolved over time to match the needs of its beneficiaries, from looking for resources to develop fisheries, to assessment for fisheries management, to training scientists to the application of the EAF. Data gathered through the Project was now also finding new uses, such as assisting environment ministries.

102. Support was expressed for decision-making on the basis of the best available science. However, it was observed that the lack, or limited nature, of available scientific knowledge should not preclude decision-making. In response to a question regarding specific areas that should be prioritized in the development of scientific expertise by developing countries, Mr. Barbière noted that although there was no set hierarchy, some key areas and methodologies had been identified where the development of scientific knowledge was most cost-effective.

103. A delegation sought clarification on the need for capacity-building for scientific research in establishing a regional framework for the governance of ocean activities, such as the Wider Caribbean Regional Ocean Governance Framework. Mr. Mahon noted the difficulties in addressing the capacity needs of many smaller States in the region, and stressed the need to rationalize where to develop the capacity and how to share that capacity among States. The establishment of a regional university for scientific research could provide a solution in that regard.

104. Delegations discussed different ways in which to improve capacity-building in oceans at the local level. In particular, questions were posed regarding the possible role of technology, such as cell phones, how to increase the participation of women in fisheries to increase productivity, and how to address the impacts on the livelihoods of local communities when conservation and management measures were put in place. Ms. Thilsted provided an example of how technology and innovation could further the dissemination of information to local communities, in particular in their local languages. She also provided some examples of projects which increased the role of women in the fisheries supply chain, and noted that women in some countries were increasingly moving into traditionally male-dominated fields. She cautioned that it was necessary to monitor how these projects were being implemented as additional roles for women might result in an increase in their workload and the transfer of responsibilities to other members of the family. Regarding measures to mitigate the loss of livelihoods, training, the availability of microcredit and the possibility of conditional cash transfers were highlighted as possible tools. Ms. Glineur noted that the GEF, World Bank, and national banks might have programmes to assist in developing some of these tools, including through temporary grants.

105. Some delegations noted the important role of experts in the process of developing indicators for the SDGs, in particular the participation of national statistical commissions. The input from ocean experts from States and, when necessary, the advice of competent organizations of the UN system, was also regarded as beneficial to this process. A delegation noted that indicators regarding fisheries subsidies based on types of fisheries subsidies could be useful and more effective in terms of accountability. Some delegations queried whether the contribution of fisheries to the gross domestic product of developing countries could be used as an indicator for SDG 14. To this question, Mr. Aqorau noted revenues that were not captured in gross domestic product, as well as the diverse interests of developing States in all facets of the value chain, from rights holders to markets. Mr. Parmentier suggested, in view of the forthcoming round of World Trade Organization discussions in December 2015 that

the international community request the revival of the discussions on fisheries subsidies on the basis of SDG 14.

106. Some delegations inquired as to how indicators could be developed to address capacity development and knowledge and technology transfer for marine science, and how to make them both meaningful and measurable so as not to overburden developing countries. Mr. Koranteng acknowledged the difficulties in developing appropriate indicators, and stated that the basic elements could be measuring what actions were taken and the effect and effectiveness of those actions. Mr. Barbière noted that a single indicator might not be sufficient and suggested a composite index including factors such as scientific infrastructure, investment in science and scientific interaction at the international level.

107. Following up on the reference to difficulties in enforcing targets termed as overly ambitious, Ms. Qiu explained that the challenge stemmed in part from centralized decision-making that was not fully aware of conservation needs and with insufficient involvement of local stakeholders and communities to ensure transparency and a regular review of the effectiveness of marine policies.

108. In response to questions regarding the proposal by the Global Ocean Commission to establish an independent ocean accountability board, Mr. Parmentier explained that the idea had been inspired by the Financial Stability Board established in 2009 following the financial crisis. He indicated that the question of the composition of an ocean accountability board remained open but it could consist of independent personalities who could assess progress towards ocean conservation and report to the international community. A delegation expressed the view that such accountability regime was not a convincing idea. Indicators would be utilized to assess progress. In addition, the delegation stressed that accountability was linked to transfer of technology and financing for development.

109. A delegation inquired whether there was a link between the proposed board and the proposal that had been made by a delegation to hold a series of triennial meetings to assess progress in implementation of SDG 14. Mr. Parmentier observed that, while there was no relation, some linkages could partly resolve the problem of fragmentation of governance of ocean activities.

#### **Agenda item 4**

##### **Inter-agency cooperation and coordination**

110. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, United Nations Legal Counsel, made a statement in his capacity as the focal point for UN-Oceans, providing information on the activities of UN-Oceans since the fifteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process.<sup>4</sup>

111. He stated that UN-Oceans had continued to work towards the identification of possible areas for collaboration and synergies, as mandated in the revised terms of reference and within the context of its 2014-2015 Work Programme. In this regard, the first step of developing an inventory of mandates, priorities and ongoing and planned activities of UN-Oceans members had been completed with the identification of relevant mandates. Members were proceeding to the further elaboration of the inventory in the form of a user-

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<sup>4</sup> The full statement is available on the website of UN-Oceans.

friendly online searchable database, developed and funded by the FAO, which would be made available on the UN-Oceans website ([www.unoceans.org](http://www.unoceans.org)) as soon as the initial inventory of activities was completed. The next step, facilitated by the online database, was to identify synergies or joint activities illustrating existing and possible areas for collaboration. He noted that continued updates and fine-tuning of the inventory, including towards increasing its user-friendly operation, will require sustainable funding. In that regard, he indicated that, thus far, no UN-Oceans earmarked contributions had been made to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General to support the promotion of international law referred to in resolution 69/245. He invited Members States and others in a position to do so to make such contributions to the trust fund.

112. Apart from teleconferences, UN-Oceans had, upon a suggestion by members to hold one face-to-face meeting every other year on a rotation basis at the headquarters of one of its members, convened one such meeting on 20 March 2015 at IMO Headquarters in London.<sup>5</sup>

### **Agenda item 5**

#### **Process for the selection of topics and panellists, so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly**

113. The Co-Chairs introduced item 5, noting that it reflected paragraph 292 of General Assembly resolution 69/245. Delegations were invited to provide their views and make proposals on ways to devise a transparent, objective and inclusive process for the selection of topics and panellists, so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly.

114. The Director of DOALOS then provided an update on the status of the Voluntary Trust Fund for the purpose of assisting developing countries, in particular SIDS and landlocked developing States, to attend the meetings of the Informal Consultative Process. It was pointed out that the Trust Fund played an important role in facilitating the participation of representatives and panellists from developing States in meetings of the Informal Consultative Process. She recalled that the General Assembly in its resolution 69/245 encouraged Member States to make financial contributions to the Trust Fund, in order to ensure that the Trust Fund maintained a workable balance.

### **Agenda item 6**

#### **Issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea**

115. The Co-Chairs recalled that the General Assembly had, in paragraph 298 of resolution 69/245, decided that the Informal Consultative Process would focus its discussions at its seventeenth meeting in 2016 on “marine debris, plastics and microplastics”. They drew attention to the composite streamlined list of issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea and invited comments from delegations. The issue of fishery subsidies, as contained in the list, was highlighted by a delegation. The Co-Chairs invited any delegation wishing to propose additional issues for inclusion in the list to submit them to the Co-Chairs or to the Secretariat in writing before the end of the meeting of the Informal Consultative Process.

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<sup>5</sup> The report of the meeting will be made available at [www.unoceans.org](http://www.unoceans.org).