

Statement of Norway under Item 3: General exchange of views

Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea Twenty-first Meeting, 14-18 June 2021

Norway welcomes discussions on sea-level rise and its impacts in the United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

Sea-level rise poses a profound threat to the international community. As highlighted by the 2019 IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and the Cryosphere, human communities in close connection with coastal environments, small islands (including Small Island Developing States), polar areas and high mountains are particularly exposed to ocean and cryosphere change, such as sea-level rise, extreme sea level and shrinking cryosphere. Other communities further from the coast are also exposed to changes in the Ocean. The report highlights the urgency of prioritizing timely, ambitious and coordinated action to address the unprecedented and enduring changes in the ocean and cryosphere.

We therefore welcome broad discussions on sea-level rise in several fora of the United Nations, including here in the ICP, as well as in the International Law Commission (ILC), the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The UNCLOS provides the international framework for all activities at sea. It amounts to a common set of rules, providing predictability and stability. It is therefore a core priority to safeguard and strengthen the Convention system. These considerations will guide Norway's approach to the work of the United Nations on this topic and to the issue in general. The point of departure is that maritime areas reflect the land mass that generates the maritime claim and responding to sea-level rise will require practical, political and legal solutions. Our discussions about the legal consequences of sea-level rise must therefore be seen in tandem with, and not overshadow, our political determination to address climate change and its impacts.

We look forward to continuing this important discussion with UN Member States, as well as engaging with the ILC in this field.