

# UN-Oceans Work Programme

## (January – December 2024)

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### I. UN-Oceans mandate

1. UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority, within existing resources, in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the respective competences of each of its participating organizations and the mandates and priorities approved by their respective governing bodies.
2. Pursuant to its terms of reference,<sup>1</sup> UN-Oceans is mandated to:
  - (a) Strengthen and promote coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to ocean and coastal areas;
  - (b) Regularly share ongoing and planned activities of participating organizations within the framework of relevant United Nations and other mandates with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy;
  - (c) Facilitate, as appropriate, inputs by its participating organizations to the annual reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries to be submitted to the Secretariat;
  - (d) Facilitate inter-agency information exchange, including sharing of experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned in ocean-related matters.

### II. Activities in 2024

#### A. Sharing of information on ongoing and planned activities of participating organizations within the framework of relevant United Nations and other mandates with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy

1. Identify ongoing and planned activities related to ocean and coastal issues approved by the respective governing bodies of UN-Oceans members for the purpose of updating the Inventory of mandates and activities and continue to

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 68/70, Annex.

develop the online platform for the inventory to enhance its user-friendliness.  
[Ongoing]

2. Maintain the calendar of conferences, intergovernmental meetings and processes, workshops and other events related to oceans and coastal issues, and share information on planned activities, for example in relation to the following (to be updated as necessary):
  - a. The Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects [coordination DOALOS];
  - b. The Agreement 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 [coordination DOALOS];
  - c. The 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference [coordination DESA, with support from DOALOS];
  - d. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development [coordination IOC];
  - e. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework [coordination CBD];
  - f. The Conference of the Parties and the annual ocean and climate change dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [coordination UNFCCC];
  - g. The United Nations Environment Assembly [coordination UNEP];
  - h. The Assembly and Council of the International Seabed Authority [coordination ISA];
  - i. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species [coordination CMS];
  - j. The Committee on Fisheries [coordination FAO];
  - k. The Assembly and Marine Environment Protection Committee of the IMO [coordination IMO];
  - l. The United Nations Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea [coordination DOALOS];
  - m. The 1<sup>st</sup> Global Supply Chain Forum [co-organized by UNCTAD and the Government of Barbados];
  - n. The 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States [coordination DESA and OHRLS];
  - o. World Oceans Day [coordination DOALOS];
  - p. The Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection [coordination IMO];

- q. The Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [coordination CITES].
- 3. Contribute information to the World Oceans Day portal regarding planned events to mark World Oceans Day 2024 [coordination IOC and DOALOS].
- 4. Update the UN-Oceans website to enhance visibility of activities by UN-Oceans and its members [coordination DOALOS].

## **B. Strengthening and promotion of coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to ocean and coastal areas**

- 1. Identify synergies and possible areas for collaboration, supported by the inventory of mandates, priorities and ongoing and planned activities. [Ongoing]
- 2. Collaborate with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO on the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, including through participation in the Decade Advisory Board [coordination IOC].
- 3. Support preparations and activities towards the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference [coordination DESA with support from DOALOS].
- 4. Continue to contribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including as referred to in “Our ocean, our future: call for action” (General Assembly resolution 71/312, para. 14) and “Our ocean, our future, our responsibility” (General Assembly resolution 76/296, para. 16).
- 5. Implement the UN-Oceans voluntary commitment launched within the context of the 2017 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development (Ocean Conference) by providing briefings in the margins of intergovernmental meetings or conferences of parties or relevant regional events, to inform participants of current ocean-related regulatory and policy frameworks as well as relevant activities, for instance through workshops or dialogues.
- 6. Implement the UN-Oceans Statement of Commitments on the BBNJ Agreement.<sup>2</sup>
- 7. Support the activities of the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean aimed at leading the United Nations advocacy and public outreach efforts to ensure that the outcomes of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference, including the voluntary commitments registered at the Conference, are fully analysed and implemented,

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<sup>2</sup> The Statement of commitments in relation to the Agreement 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 (Annex I), was adopted by participating members at the UN-Oceans meeting held at the Principals’ level on the BBNJ Agreement, on 16 January 2024.

and to encourage stakeholders' activities in support of the implementation of SDG 14, in particular through the Communities of Ocean Action [coordination DESA].

8. Contribute to the work of the UNFCCC ocean and climate change dialogue, in relation to strengthening linkages across UN mandates and processes.
9. Organize UN-Oceans side events at relevant ocean-related meetings in 2024, including the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (27-30 May, Antigua and Barbuda), the High-Level Event for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference (June, Costa Rica), the High-Level Political Forum (8-17 July), the 2024 SDG Summit (September) and other high-level events in relation to SDG 14 and other relevant SDGs, and the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 29) (11-22 November, Azerbaijan).
10. Organize joint activities, where appropriate and feasible, to mark World Oceans Day 2024 [coordination DOALOS].

#### **C. Facilitation of inputs by UN-Oceans participating organizations to the annual reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries**

1. Contribute to the preparation of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the topic(s) of focus of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea [coordination DOALOS].
2. Contribute to the annual report of the Secretary-General on developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea during the period 31 August 2023 to 31 August 2024 [coordination DOALOS].

#### **D. Facilitation of inter-agency information exchange, including sharing of experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned in ocean-related matters**

1. Continually exchange information and case studies on experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned utilizing different mechanisms, such as the "LME:LEARN" platform, Digital Platform on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter, Marine Protected Areas Toolkit (MPATH) [coordination UNDP, UNEP, IOC].

## Annex I

### ***Statement of commitments in relation to the Agreement 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***

The secretariats of the organizations participating in the meeting of UN-Oceans held at the principals' level on 16 January 2024 on the *Agreement 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* (BBNJ Agreement),

*Being mindful* of the objective of the BBNJ Agreement to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, for the present and in the long term, through effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and further international cooperation and coordination,

*Underscoring* the importance of ensuring, in a coherent and cooperative manner and within the existing mandate of each entity, common messaging, efficient use of resources, and avoidance of gaps and duplication in the support provided to States and regional economic integration organizations in their efforts to become parties to the BBNJ Agreement and, when the Agreement has entered into force, in relation to its implementation,

1. *Emphasize* their commitment to the goals of UN-Oceans of strengthening and promoting coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities in the context of the promotion of a better understanding of the BBNJ Agreement and preparations for its entry into force and, once in force, its implementation, building on the work carried out by UN-Oceans members under the Convention and relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies;
2. *Commit* to working closely together with the support of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, acting as the interim secretariat for the Agreement and UN-Oceans focal point, including in the context of the promotion of a better understanding of the BBNJ Agreement and preparations for its entry into force;
3. *Commit* to regularly sharing, including in the context of UN-Oceans meetings, information on their planned and ongoing activities related to the BBNJ Agreement, within the framework of their respective mandates, with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy;
4. *Undertake* to further enhance inter-agency information exchange in relation to the BBNJ Agreement, including sharing of experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned;
5. *Request* the UN-Oceans focal point to include a standing item on the BBNJ Agreement on the agenda of all UN-Oceans meetings in 2024 with a view to facilitating information sharing in relation to the Agreement and related activities;
6. *Commit* to considering organizing joint activities aimed at supporting States and regional economic integration organizations in relation to the BBNJ Agreement and its complementarity with relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies.