

**Twenty-fifth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended
Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the
Law of the Sea
UN-Oceans statement**

**Statement by Mr. Elinor Hammar skjöld
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and
United Nations Legal Counsel
Thursday, 19 June 2025, 10 a.m.
Conference Room 3**

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Agenda item 4: Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address this meeting for the first time, in my capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel. Due to conflicting appointments, I was unable to attend the opening of the 25th meeting of the Informal Consultative Process. Today, I am pleased to be among you, and in my capacity as Focal Point of UN-Oceans, to highlight

the work of UN-Oceans under this important agenda item on “Inter-agency cooperation and coordination”.

UN-Oceans is the inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence, and effectiveness of United Nations system entities and the International Seabed Authority in ocean and coastal matters. UN-Oceans is now 31 members strong, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as its newest member.

As we continue to reflect on the important discussions, commitments, and outcomes of last week United Nations Ocean Conference, co-hosted by France and Costa Rica, the role of multilateralism and necessity of effective international coordination and cooperation for the future of our ocean has perhaps never been more evident.

In this regard, just a few days ago in Nice, France, I was delighted to participate in a side event organized by UN-Oceans in the margins of the Conference on the theme “*UN-Oceans as a mechanism to mobilize multilateral ocean action and amplify collective impacts toward the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14*”. **20** members of UN-Oceans were represented at that event, which highlighted how UN-Oceans members are building synergies and collaborating to act as one in supporting States’ efforts to achieve Goal 14.

Since the last meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, UN-Oceans has convened several other side events in the margins of intergovernmental meetings, which showcased

UN-Oceans as a multi-disciplinary partnership to galvanize collective ocean action towards common goals. I will share two examples.

In October 2024, at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, UN-Oceans held a side event on how UN-Oceans can support States in meeting their obligations under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

In December 2024, UN-Oceans held a side event at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change twenty-ninth Conference of the Parties. At this event, members presented how UN-Oceans can support States in scaling up ocean-climate action for people and planet.

UN-Oceans members also continued to contribute to several ocean-related processes, including the Climate Change and Ocean Dialogues under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement and the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Last year, at a meeting of Principals convened by the Legal Counsel, UN-Oceans members agreed upon a *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 BBNJ Agreement). Through that statement, UN-Oceans members emphasized their commitment to strengthening 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.

I am pleased to report that in the 18 months since the adoption of this Statement of Commitments, there has been a standing item on the BBNJ Agreement on the agenda of regular UN-Oceans virtual meetings convened by DOALOS, where members have been actively sharing information on their activities in relation to the Agreement, towards identifying synergies and opportunities for cooperation.

Additionally, as reflected in its Work Programme for 2025, UN-Oceans is continuing to focus on strengthening and promoting the coordination of its members' activities relating to oceans and coastal areas, supporting the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference, and contributing to the UNFCCC ocean and climate change dialogue, among others. UN-Oceans will continue its work on facilitating interagency information exchange, strengthening linkages across UN mandates and processes, and contributing to the Secretary-General's efforts to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Through its extensive calendar of ocean-related meetings at which members can plan activities and join events, UN-Oceans seeks to maximize occasions to share experiences, best practices,

and lessons learned, but also avoid duplication. The regular schedule of virtual meetings held every six weeks constitutes a platform for discussing innovative ideas on how to revitalize UN-Oceans, improve its ability to deliver as one with desired impact, and gain visibility.

All these activities demonstrate the benefits of UN-Oceans as a forum for coordinating and amplifying collective ocean action.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Let me now offer some reflections on the theme of this twenty-fifth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, *“Capacity building and the transfer of marine technology: New developments, approaches and challenges”*.

Capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology are critical to enable the sustainable development of the ocean by all States. The transfer of marine technology requires, more particularly, enhanced cooperation and partnerships between donor States, the business community, recipient States, and other relevant stakeholders, including UN system organizations.

As noted in the Secretary-General’s report, a wide range of capacity-building activities is carried out in the United Nations system, including by UN-Oceans members, pursuant to their mandates. Despite funding challenges, UN-Oceans is committed to supporting developing countries, including least developed

countries and Small Island Developing States, by continuing to carry out targeted needs-based capacity-building activities and awareness-raising programmes, jointly or individually. This is especially important to ensure that developing countries can fully implement the Convention, its implementing agreements and other relevant instruments, thereby deriving benefits from the sustainable development of the oceans, seas and their resources.

In terms of challenges, there is a need to avoid duplication and fragmentation of efforts. In this regard coordination within the United Nations system, including through UN-Oceans, can uncover opportunities for coordination and collaboration, leverage synergies, maximize the use of limited resources, and build on previous achievements.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this 'super year' for the ocean, we have all heard the call to accelerate action and mobilize all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean. As a multi-disciplinary partnership, UN-Oceans is well placed, if sufficiently empowered and supported, to build ocean-related capacity, support States and galvanize collective efforts to achieve this important goal, towards the health of our ocean, and the health of our planet.

In conclusion, I would like to thank once again the members of UN-Oceans for their contributions to our joint activities as well

as their valuable submissions to the reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, including on the topic of focus of this meeting.

Thank you.