

**Opening Statement to the twenty-second meeting of the
Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and
the Law of the Sea on theme 'Ocean observing'**

**Statement by Mr. Vladimir Jares, Director, Division for
Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea**

on behalf of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares,

**Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United
Nations Legal Counsel**

6 June 2022, 10:00 am
Conference Room 2

Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join the Co-Chairs in welcoming you to the twenty-second meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

The Informal Consultative Process is an important annual process assisting the General Assembly to fulfil its role as the body providing global stewardship on oceans and the law of the sea. It does so by highlighting developments in ocean affairs and the law of the sea and by suggesting issues to be considered by the Assembly, particularly areas in which coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency level could be enhanced. Each year, we have the chance to delve into a

particular topic of importance, to hear from world-renowned experts, and to consider how we might, including through deeper coordination and cooperation, address some of the challenges we are facing.

The theme of this year's meeting, 'Ocean observing', could not be more timely. We all know that the health of our oceans is under serious threat. The ocean and marine life are being severely affected by the impacts of climate change, including ocean warming, acidification and deoxygenation; by marine pollution from various sources and in various forms, including marine debris, especially plastics and microplastics; and by the unsustainable use of ocean resources, including overfishing. This is having detrimental effects on human well-being and livelihoods and will continue to have such impacts unless urgent action is taken to counter these threats.

Taking steps to reverse the decline in ocean health, and to manage and use the ocean and its resources in a sustainable way, requires data. It requires baseline data, data to assist in understanding the existing situation and in measuring trends, and data to inform interventions and adaptation actions. It also requires additional data to gauge the effectiveness of such actions, to assist in enforcing regulations, and to support the

scientific and technological innovations that will help improve the situation, locally, regionally and globally.

This meeting of the Informal Consultative Process complements other intergovernmental processes recognizing the significance of ocean science in meeting our shared challenges. These include the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which aims to develop transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, including by expanding the Global Ocean Observing System, as well as the upcoming United Nations Ocean Conference, which will focus on “Scaling up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions”.

As detailed in the Report of the Secretary-General prepared in advance of this meeting, an extensive ocean observation network is already in existence, providing invaluable data which contributes to science-based decision-making for sustainable development. However, there are gaps in the coverage of observational data, both spatially and in relation to various ocean conditions and variables. There are also challenges relating to the management of data value chains, including in ensuring ocean observation data is findable, accessible, interoperable and

reusable. The Report highlights opportunities to expand and strengthen the global ocean observation framework, including through cooperation, coordination and collaboration at all levels, innovation, best practices and infrastructure development. This meeting will provide an opportunity to deepen our understanding of where we are on ocean observing, the challenges we are facing, and opportunities for improvement, in support of the restoration, conservation and sustainable use of our ocean and its resources.

I encourage you to take the opportunity provided by this meeting, including through conversations with experts, colleagues, and other stakeholders, to deepen our understanding of ocean observing. It is also crucial to consider how we can cooperate to best support the development of the global ocean observation framework for improving knowledge of the ocean and supporting actions to achieve ocean sustainability.

I wish you a successful meeting.