



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**High-level Webinar to present the
Draft International Seabed Authority Action Plan in support of the UN
Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development**

**Panel 1: “Importance of science for the effective implementation of
International Law for the sustainable development of the ocean and its
resources”**

Remarks

by

Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares

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

17 November 2020, 8:00 -10:10 am (New York time)

(virtual event)

Honorable Minister,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first thank Secretary-General Michael Lodge for providing us with this opportunity to get together and reflect in this panel, on the importance of science for the effective implementation of international law for the sustainable development of the ocean and its resources.



This subject is both timely and of enduring importance; particularly as we about to commence, on 1 January, the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and as States are called upon to accelerate action to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14. The initiative of the International Seabed Authority to develop a marine scientific research action plan in support of the Decade is not only an important contribution to this momentous undertaking, but also critical to the implementation of international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

I would recall that the Convention is at the center of a vast network of sectoral treaties and other policy instruments that strengthen ocean governance. The scientific understanding of the ocean is essential for an effective implementation of the Convention and other ocean-related instruments; for informing decision-making and the adoption of management measures that can reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health; and for achieving the sustainable development of the ocean space and ocean-based economies.

The Convention, which includes complex scientific and technical provisions and relies on best available scientific evidence, requires cooperation at all levels for the conduct of marine scientific research, the development of capacities in marine science, transfer of marine technology and the dissemination of knowledge and information. All these aspects, which are intertwined with the ability of States,





developed and developing, to effectively discharge their duties and exercise their rights under the Convention, are part of the Authority's action plan.

I wish to congratulate the Authority on its development, which I believe will greatly contribute to improving the scientific understanding of the Area, but also to the identification of the needs of developing States and the development of their capacity in relation to marine scientific research.

The ability of States to derive benefits from the implementation of the Convention and develop sustainable ocean-based economies relies on the use of the best scientific information available, including through cooperation and the development of marine technology. This is particularly relevant to the Area, which is a very good illustration of the inextricable relationship between science, international law and sustainable development.

The reality of this mutually reinforcing relationship requires that we build on the considerable progress made towards the universal participation in and implementation of the Convention and other ocean-related relevant instruments. This will provide an impetus for greater cooperation in marine scientific research and knowledge transfer and help States achieve the sustainable development of the ocean and its resources.

I thank you for your attention.

