



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**Keeping the Momentum for Ocean Action: Webinar series for 2021
“Implementing SDG 14 with the Communities of Ocean Action”**

Statement

by

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30 March 2021, 9:00-11:45AM (EDT)

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address this webinar, which provides us with a timely opportunity to reflect on the important role of the Communities of Ocean Action.

At the outset, I wish to note that I am speaking as a co-focal point for the Community on Implementation of international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; a role which I have the pleasure of performing together with Mr. Michael Lodge, the

Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority.

There is broad consensus that oceans and marine resources are essential to successfully tackle poverty eradication, ensure food security and sustained economic growth, and of course, provide livelihoods and decent work. It is therefore essential to ensure that all actions be undertaken in a sustainable manner



and with due consideration for the need to protect the environment and biodiversity.

The best way to achieve this is to work towards the effective implementation of the legal framework for the oceans, with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at its core. In fact it is a pivotal condition to deliver against the 2030 Agenda and in particular in relation to the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

It is with this in mind that through the activities undertaken by our Community, we have explored different yet related pathways to improve the implementation of the Convention and related instruments.

One area of focus has been addressing gaps relating to the lack of participation of many developing States in decision-making processes and in operational activities, such as marine scientific research. Moreover, the full and effective implementation of the Convention requires the promulgation and implementation of national legislation, rules, regulations and policy, which can pose a challenge to developing States, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

We have discussed different responses to address such challenges, including establishing trust funds, facilitating capacity-building programmes and providing advice and assistance for an improved implementation of the Convention in national legal systems. As important as such initiatives are, we have observed that they are often confronted by the lack of sustainable financing.

Building on this, a second area of focus consisted in discussing the specific challenges and needs challenging developing countries. We noted in this regard that most of them faced similar situations which call for innovative solutions to improve their human, technological, institutional and systemic capacities. Devising new financing mechanisms aimed at furthering the work undertaken by all relevant stakeholders to address such needs is also urgent.





A third area requiring due consideration relates to the importance of strengthening ocean governance through enhanced cooperation and coordination. To that end, it is imperative to identify new partnerships. The discussions on this specific point have been inspired by the General Assembly's repeated observation that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach. The Assembly has also emphasized the need to improve cooperation and coordination at the national, regional and global levels, in accordance with the Convention, to support and supplement the efforts of each State for implementation and observance of the Convention and the integrated management and sustainable development of the oceans and seas. It is essential to promote further the need to create concrete synergies, avoid duplications and overlap of mandates and responsibilities between competent organizations.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In view of these valuable discussions, we are convinced that all Communities of Ocean Action and their members have an important contribution to make in the delivery of SDG14 particularly by raising awareness of the legal and policy framework for the oceans through which we can ensure the effective implementation of the Convention.

Moving forward, it will be important to capitalize on linkages and avoid possible duplication of efforts by promoting exchange of information, cooperation and coordination between the nine Communities.

Member States and relevant international organizations are also called upon to play a major role by developing the capacity of States towards broader participation in and effective implementation of the Convention, its implementing Agreements and other ocean-related instruments, and by undertaking activities to strengthen ocean





governance. These efforts are more than ever needed now, in light of the ongoing disruption of many ocean-related initiatives caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to build back better.

In the lead-up to the postponed 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference, we wish to confirm our determination to continue to promote the effective implementation of international law as reflected in the Convention, on the basis of which it will be possible to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources for sustainable development.

Thank you.

