



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**Scaling up ocean action through inter-agency cooperation and coordination -
Case studies, challenges and opportunities**

**Side Event Hosted by UN-Oceans at the 2022 United Nations Ocean
Conference**

Statement

by

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16:00-17:15, Altice Arena, Side Event Room 1

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and pleasure to welcome you to my country and to this UN-Oceans side event on Scaling up ocean action through inter-agency cooperation and coordination - Case studies, challenges and opportunities.

UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism of twenty-nine (29) members that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority, in relation to activities relating to oceans and coastal areas.



In my capacity as UN-Oceans Focal Point, I strongly believe that cooperation and coordination of UN-Oceans members is needed now more than ever. Without it, we cannot hope to be successful in addressing the challenges faced by the oceans.

Science has long told us that the ocean underpins almost every facet of life on earth.

It regulates our climate, supports vast biodiversity networks, and is critical to the health of the planet.

It provides us with an important source of food and a means of global transportation and trade.

The ocean supports the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide and is a natural and cultural resource that brings joy, meaning and purpose to many.

It is truly invaluable, touching every aspect of our lives.

Till today, the ocean remains a new frontier. It provides yet untapped potential of scientific and technological innovations notably in the field of renewable energy.

As such, the ocean is our opportunity for building back better, as one, and with no one left behind. Together, we can realize our goal for a healthy planet and prosperous people.

One way of doing so is to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 on “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. And needless to emphasize that to that end, cooperation and coordination is crucial.

Allow me to highlight just two of the reasons why.





First, the problems affecting our ocean, and the potential solutions, are interrelated.

The marine environment is, for instance, being threatened by pressures from multiple sources, including from climate change, resource extraction activities, pollution and invasive species.

These impacts accelerate biodiversity loss and habitat damage, with flow-on effects in turn on fisheries stocks, food security and the livelihoods of those dependent on the industry.

Solutions for such problems must, of necessity, also be multi-sectoral in nature, addressing the various environmental, social and economic factors, using scientific foundations, and acting within relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.

However, mostly for administrative purposes, the tendency, internationally, regionally and nationally, is to consider issues in a sectoral manner.

UN-Oceans is particularly well-suited to facilitate the necessary cross-sectoral action in the ocean context, given the members' mandates, their sector-specific expertise, and their ability to work together with States, other stakeholders and with other entities within the United Nations system.

Secondly, we are probably all aware of the unsatisfactory state of ocean-related global financing, including for marine scientific research.

Sustainable Development Goal 14 is notoriously underfunded, despite the importance of the ocean for the well-being of the entire planet and the urgent need for action to improve its health. This results in a situation where we must endeavour to do more with less, in the most efficient manner possible.





Again, inter-agency cooperation could provide a means to do just that, by leveraging and combining existing mandates and resources to maximize the impact of ocean-related actions, to learn from past experiences, and to promote innovative solutions.

The mandates of UN-Oceans members focus on fields as diverse as economic and social development, the environment, science the maintenance of peace and security, and human rights, all of which intersect with ocean-related issues.

Indeed, to appreciate the intersection of mandates across the United Nations system, we need look no further than the vast array of legal instruments which have been developed under the auspices of different organizations and within the overarching framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, whose 40th anniversary of adoption we celebrate this year.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that UN-Oceans has registered a voluntary commitment at this Ocean Conference entitled The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at 40: Successes and Future Prospects.

This publication, informed by inputs from UN-Oceans members, will illustrate how the legal framework of the Convention has contributed to the development of other international instruments, including rules, standards and recommended practices and procedures, in ocean-related fields, to the fulfilment of members' respective ocean-related mandates, and to the achievement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of this year's Ocean Conference focuses on scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Sustainable





Development Goal 14, with an emphasis on stocktaking, partnerships and solutions.

This side event provides an opportunity to take stock of the innovative and successful partnerships developed by members within the framework of UN-Oceans, focusing on case studies where inter-agency cooperation and partnerships have resulted in strengthened ocean-related action for the achievement of Goal 14.

It will highlight how inter-agency cooperation, including through UN-Oceans, can provide a means to address the cumulative challenges facing our ocean through engagement across the United Nations system.

It will emphasize the demonstrable benefits of such partnerships for Member States and other stakeholders. The case studies to be discussed include actions to improve the state of ocean science, and areas in which innovative solutions were developed.

The intention is not to look only to past successes, but also to engage with one another and with you, the audience, in a robust and forward-looking discussion on how UN-Oceans can more effectively contribute to ocean action through enhanced inter-agency cooperation? Considering the role of science for implementing Goal 14, what are the practical, implementable solutions and ideas to transform commitments into the action our ocean so desperately needs?

It is heartening to see more attention being played to the importance of our ocean and of the possibilities to be realized.





But in light of global realities, we will need to be smart about how we take action, making the best use of our existing expertise and employing limited resources in an efficient way.

This is the ambition we have set for ourselves, and I hope that this event provides you with food for thought regarding how we can do this together.

Thank you.

