



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

UN-Oceans side event

Ocean action to support resilient prosperity in SIDS

4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, Antigua and Barbuda, 27-30 May 2024

Statement

by

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Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and
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10:00, American University of Antigua, Room 5

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and pleasure to welcome you, in my capacity as UN-Oceans Focal Point, to this side event entitled Ocean action to support resilient prosperity in SIDS. I wish to first thank all my colleagues at the principal level who are participating in this opening session, as well as all the panelists from entities that are members of UN-Oceans. Their commitment to be here in person and to contribute to this important and timely conversation on how to support resilient prosperity for Small Island Developing States through ocean action is very much appreciated.



The current text of the outcome document of the SIDS-4 Conference, the “Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)”, highlights the value of the United Nations system in supporting SIDS to achieve their sustainable development objectives. The document calls for UN entities to integrate the declaration into their work, and for proposals to ensure coordination, coherence and effectiveness across the UN system in relation to SIDS.

This ambition speaks directly to the mandate of UN-Oceans. As an inter-agency mechanism of thirty (30) members spanning the UN system and the International Seabed Authority, we are united in our shared purpose to cooperate, coordinate and identify opportunities for synergy in our activities concerning oceans and coastal areas. And we are acutely aware how important this work is. Especially now. Especially for SIDS.

Seeing what our members have already achieved and are currently undertaking, I am confident that our actions are instrumental in understanding and confronting the triple planetary crisis that SIDS are particularly vulnerable to, and in fostering resilient SIDS economies.

In the two panel discussions today, you will hear of the solutions that UN-Oceans members are working on, which are as diverse as their mandates.

I would be remiss if I were not to point out in particular that you will also hear about the work of my office, the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, in particular, the capacity-building work that the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of sea is doing to assist SIDS when it comes to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including the recently adopted BBNJ Agreement.





Importantly, this event will highlight both our contributions to resilient prosperity for SIDS, and the enhanced value of inter-agency cooperation, including through UN-Oceans.

In closing, I hope that this event reaffirms the benefits of working together, leveraging our collective expertise and resources to ensure that the Small Island Developing States—the big ocean States—not only survive but thrive in the face of global challenges, paving the way for a sustainable and prosperous future.

Thank you.

