

Thank you Mr Co-facilitator,

I am honored to address this Preparatory Meeting on behalf of UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, or simply IOC. IOC applauds the decision to assign central role to science and innovation in the upcoming UN Ocean Conference.

The IOC, mandated by the UNGA, is currently concluding the preparation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. It is heartwarming to hear repeated references to the Decade in this meeting.

The most important message from IOC today is the following: “Yes, it is possible to strengthen and direct ocean science to enable us to achieve most of the targets of SDG 14 and facilitate the achievement of other goals, reducing extreme poverty and hunger, supporting human health, helping to adapt to and mitigate climate change”.

The concept of the Decade enforces observations and research, data and knowledge, social sciences, towards managing the ocean through the ecosystem approach, use of coastal zone management, maritime spatial plans and science - based marine protection areas.

]No one will be left behind. This is the science not only for developed countries but also for Africa, Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, including land-locked countries. The Decade will embrace indigenous peoples, traditional knowledge, early career ocean professionals, and women. The Decade will engage all stakeholders including private sector.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

IOC will launch at the Lisbon Conference the 2nd Edition of the Global Ocean Science Report. We will report to you the current capacity of ocean science. The report will offer a baseline of our knowledge for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the start of the Decade.

As mentioned by several speakers this morning, the UN Decade is an integral part and an initiative of the UN-wide system. The goals of the UN Decade and the Lisbon conference are fully aligned. Supporting the themes of 8 proposed dialogues, IOC would like to emphasize the need for a cross-cutting science/innovation element in all of them. Also, to strengthen the impact of the Conference, the IOC is proposing to include in the programme of the Conference a flagship Decade event. At the event, we would present the draft action plan of the Decade and also unveil new partnerships built in the course of multiple global and regional multi-stakeholder consultations, which IOC organized in all ocean basins during the two extremely demanding years of preparing the Decade, involving thousands of people.

I thank all who joined us in preparations of the Decade and you all for listening!