

## UN Ocean Conference Highlights: Monday, 27 June 2022

On Monday, the second UN Ocean Conference opened in Lisbon, Portugal. Delegates met in plenary in the morning, and in an interactive dialogue on marine pollution in the afternoon.

### Opening and election of co-presidents

Welcoming delegates, Carlos Moedas, Mayor of Lisbon, invited delegations to be inspired by the city's Tower of Belém, calling on delegates to use this Conference to mark the end of ocean degradation and the beginning of ocean preservation and set the world on a sustainable ocean trajectory.

UN Secretary General António Guterres opened the Conference. Delegates elected, by acclamation, President Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya, and President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, Portugal, to serve as the Conference co-presidents.

In his opening remarks, President de Sousa, underlined that the Conference is being held at the right time, in the right place and through the right approach, underscoring the centrality of the ocean to peace and security, health, environmental resilience, and sustainable development.

Lamenting that the global goal on the ocean is the least financed sustainable development goal (SDG), President Kenyatta urged delegates to shift gears from ideas to action, driven by science and innovation, and called for examples of nature-based solutions linking the ocean and climate change, as well as financing solutions for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean.

UN Secretary-General Guterres offered four recommendations for addressing the ocean emergency: invest in sustainable ocean economies for food and renewable energy; use the ocean as a model for how to manage global problems for the greater good; protect the ocean and people whose lives and livelihoods depend on them; and invest in an early warning system to protect coastal communities. He said the Conference can open a new horizon for a just and sustainable future for all, making a difference for the ocean and for ourselves.

Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly, said there is no context where we live on the planet without the ocean and highlighted the increasing contribution of women scientists and the passion and commitment that youth bring to this work.

Collen Vixen Kelapile, President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), highlighted the timing of the conference as an opportunity to provide essential inputs to the second in-depth review of SDG 14 (conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources) at the upcoming 2022 High-level Political Forum.

Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Conference Secretary-General, focused on the importance of science and innovation and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

### Organizational Matters

Delegates adopted the conference's rules of procedure, agenda and organization of work (A/CONF.230/1-3); elected as Vice-

Presidents: Angola and Mozambique, for Africa; Iran, Singapore and Sri Lanka for Asia and the Pacific; Estonia, Latvia and Poland for Central and Eastern Europe; Chile, Dominican Republic and Peru for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Iceland and Malta for the Western Europe and Others Group; and elected Maria de Jesus dos Reis Ferreira (Angola) as the conference's Rapporteur. The conference also established a credentials committee and appointed co-chairs for the eight Interactive Dialogues to be held throughout the week.

### General Debate

President João Lourenço, Angola, stressed the need for solutions to reverse current trends of ocean pollution and unregulated exploitation of marine resources, and shared his country's actions to guard against unregulated commercial fishing. He also highlighted the actions of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, including cooperation under the Namibe Declaration to promote sustainable fisheries.

President Surangel Whipps, Palau, speaking also for the Pacific Small Island States (PSIDS), highlighted the region's support for the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) working on an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) to end plastic pollution, and supported a new agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). He announced his country's commitment to generate 100% renewable energy by 2032.

President Iván Duque, Colombia, shared his country's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030; conserve and protect 30% of its marine areas; restore one million hectares of coral reef areas; implement a blue carbon program to protect mangroves; and establish a joint marine protected area (MPA) with other countries.

Chairman of the Presidential Council, Mohamed Younis Ahmed Al-Manfi, Libya, said security issues are exacerbating ecosystem damages to his country. President Umaro Sissoco Embaló, Guinea Bissau, emphasized his country's vulnerability to climate change and said the greatest hope for protecting the ocean resides in the youth and growing environmental awareness.

President Nana Akufo-Addo, Ghana, highlighted Ghana's role in co-convening the Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution, and urged countries to ratify the Cape Town Agreement for the Safety of Fishing Vessels to protect sea farers. President Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo, Equatorial Guinea, highlighted plans for new waste treatment facilities to stop dumping of plastic in the ocean.

Vice President Philip Mpango, Tanzania, highlighted his country's commitments in sustainable ocean development — particularly to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU)— such as the establishment of science and innovation partnerships, marine protected areas and modernizing fisheries.

Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister, Fiji, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, reminded that SDG 14 is by far the least funded of the SDGs, and stressed that the rights of small island state's maritime zones will not be lost when land disappears due to sea-level rise.

António Costa, Prime Minister, Portugal, spoke about developments in ocean sustainability, such as ensuring that 100% of maritime areas under Portugal's jurisdiction will be environmentally sound, recognizing the link between science and the ocean, and developing a bioeconomy strategy.

Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister, Iceland, highlighted the value of oceans and marine resources in bringing solutions to current crises and feeding the population. She announced that Iceland has joined the high ambition coalition on BBNJ.

### *Interactive Dialogue*

**Addressing Marine Pollution:** This dialogue was co-chaired by David Parker, Minister for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, New Zealand, and Flavien Joubert, Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Seychelles.

Co-Chair Joubert opened the dialogue and introduced the concept paper (A/CONF.230/2022/9). He called for cooperation to achieve substantive results to achieve SDG 14, and welcomed the focus on a new treaty to end plastic pollution.

Co-Chair Parker called on all countries involved in the negotiation of a new plastic pollution treaty to aim for a high ambition agreement, noting the need for strong multistakeholder engagement and financing.

Charles Goddard, Economist Group, Hong Kong, moderated the event. He noted that ending plastic pollution in the marine environment has seized the global imagination, but marine pollution takes many other forms.

Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO), pointed to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments as the IMO's action to combat marine litter from ships. He drew attention to the IMO's agreement on mandatory goal-based measures for the marking of fishing gear.

Susan Gardener, Director, Ecosystems Division, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), highlighted the multiple processes and resolutions addressing the triple planetary threat of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, in particular resolution 5/14 to end plastic pollution.

Janis Searles Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Ocean Conservancy, focused on the interlinkages between the ocean and other issues, including climate change. She said that "life below water is critical to conserve life above water," stressing that we cannot have one without the other.

Alexander Turra, Coordinator of the UNESCO Chair on Ocean Sustainability, said that change requires science, education, and action to foster governance and addresses poverty.

Andrea Meza Murillo, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, said we need to create a "Paris moment" for marine pollution and address the fossil fuel industry's contribution to plastic production.

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility (GEF), said it is our moral imperative to accelerate action and that the GEF is working with companies to support full lifecycle production approaches to help address marine pollution.

During the ensuing discussion, delegations shared their priorities and actions to address marine pollution.

Tonga, for the PSIDS, welcomed the establishment of an INC towards ending plastic pollution, calling for more ambitious action to cover the full lifecycle of plastics, including the production of virgin plastic.

Fiji, for the PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM, welcomed the UN Environment Assembly's resolution to end plastic pollution, and condemned the dumping of radioactive nuclear waste, urging Japan not to dump nuclear wastewater into the Pacific.

Antigua and Barbuda, for the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS), called on states to sign the recently launched Declaration for the Enhancement of Marine Scientific Knowledge, Research Capacity and Transfer of Marine Technology to SIDS.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES noted the lack of youth representatives in the room and shared insights and actions focused on reducing plastic pollution, including a platform where marine litter elimination solutions are shared. MALDIVES stressed their people's complete dependence on the marine ecosystems, shared a range of measures Maldives has implemented, and called for more global action.

The OECD shared results from a recently released report which provides science-based insights on plastic pollution towards 2060.

NORWAY stressed that the mandate of the ILBI to end plastic pollution is strictly defined so there is no need to restart discussions on the topic. URUGUAY shared various policy initiatives in their country and noted that "the problem is not plastic, but what we do with it."

CURAÇAO called for donations to address the catastrophic risks of an imminent spill of the oil storage platform Safer on the coast of the Red Sea. LATVIA highlighted the importance of international cooperation to address transboundary pollution, including for the heavily-polluted Baltic Sea.

THE REGULAR PROCESS FOR GLOBAL REPORTING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS said the scale of impacts from novel chemicals in the ocean is unknown, and encouraged broad participation in the upcoming third cycle of the Process.

BAHRAIN shared that the country is moving away from single-use plastics and focusing on mangroves and sea grass as nature-based solutions for marine pollution.

AUSTRALIA outlined several commitments, including one to ban waste exports; have 100% of packaging be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025; and invest USD 16 million to support the Pacific Regional Action Plan: Marine Litter: 2018-2025.

JAPAN underlined their voluntary actions with other countries under the 2019 Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, which aims to reduce marine plastic litter to zero by 2050.

YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST PROGRAMME TRUST and OCEAN SCHOOL INDIA stressed the need for strengthened ocean literacy as well as the enforcement of compulsory ocean curricula, underscoring that most ocean pollution starts from "our back yards."

ECUADOR called for a fundamental shift in production and consumption patterns to address the underlying causes of pollution.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC highlighted the "blue flag" assessments of compliance with SDG 14, which is a civil society tool to monitor progress.

KENYA shared the country's 2017 plastic carrier bag ban and the 2019 prohibition of single-use plastics in all protected areas.

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF LATIN AMERICA announced a voluntary commitment of USD 1.2 billion to support projects to benefit the ocean in the region.

SLOVAKIA noted that a recently launched deposit-refund scheme has yielded 1 million packages collected daily from a population of 5 million people.

The Co-Chairs called on delegations to submit their statements to the Secretariat, expressing hope that ILBI should be an easy win for governments, and that the world can still move towards a sustainable future for the ocean.

### *In the Corridors*

After a long wait, during which the crises affecting the ocean have only grown, many delegates were eager to share ideas on how to solve the most pressing challenges, while others limited themselves to repeating well-known keywords. Top on the list was marine pollution, at least 85% of which is plastic waste. In a curious twist, delegations received a PET bottle as part of their conference pack. "They are labeled recyclable," offered one delegate, "but aren't all PET bottles recyclable?" Another wondered if this was an "ironic joke" or a "terrible mistake," with one seasoned observer turning the bottle over to see whether there was a hidden message inside.

## UN Ocean Conference Highlights: Tuesday, 28 June 2022

On Tuesday, the second UN Ocean Conference continued in Lisbon, Portugal. Delegates met in plenary to hear general statements. Two interactive dialogues also took place during the day.

### General Debate

Prime Minister Ulisses Correia e Silva, Cabo Verde, stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships to strengthen the country's blue and green economy pathways. Prime Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Namibia, prioritized opportunities for ocean wealth, health and equity, in line with the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.

Jorge Lopes Bom Jesus, Prime Minister, São Tomé and Príncipe, shared efforts to transition to a blue economy, adopting a strategic macro-vision to link all parts of society. Prime Minister Johnny Briceño, Belize, underlined the need to cease the approval of new fossil fuel projects, which he called "carbon bombs," and drew attention to the country's issuance of the region's first blue bond.

Morocco, for the AFRICAN GROUP, highlighted the African Union's Agenda 2063 which prioritizes the blue economy, calling for inclusive and innovative partnerships to mobilize the support for implementation. For MOROCCO, he reiterated commitment to legal instruments governing the marine environment.

TONGA called for a strong agreement on plastic pollution, supported the conclusion of negotiations on the exploitation guidelines under the International Seabed Authority (ISA); and with SINGAPORE, the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

NEW ZEALAND welcomed the conclusion of the agreement on fisheries subsidies under the World Trade Organization (WTO). NORWAY encouraged the world to "act as though the plastic pollution treaty already exists."

SINGAPORE, PERU and THAILAND shared additional voluntary commitments, including on, respectively: research into renewable energy for ocean action; sustainable aquaculture; and observation and research of ocean acidification.

On national efforts, INDONESIA announced the issuance of a sovereign blue bond and ARGENTINA highlighted a draft law to manage plastic packaging production. QATAR outlined efforts and positive results from preserving marine resources through integrated management, banning single-use plastic bags, and supporting marine sciences.

TIMOR-LESTE and INDIA expressed interest in establishing a marine education center and a regional sustainable coastal and ocean research institute.

SEYCHELLES emphasized the blue economy to overcome threats of climate change and to source innovative solutions to economic and social challenges. The US urged for decarbonizing ocean transport, and increasing high seas protected areas, and announced the signing of the US National Security Memorandum to Combat IUU Fishing and Associated Labor Abuses, and the IUU Fishing Action Alliance, with the UK and Canada.

KENYA announced the establishment of a blue economy bank fund. CHINA announced, among others: the restoration and

protection for 31 marine and coastal zones in the next five years; technical support and assistance to developing countries and small island developing States (SIDS) through its Global Development Initiative; and 5 million RMB to launch a global blue partnership and network.

GERMANY highlighted the G7 Ocean Deal which prioritizes, among others, the conclusion of the BBNJ negotiations and stringent environmental management plans and standards under the ISA. PALESTINE urged for implementation of UNCLOS, calling on states who have not done so to ratify to ensure "a global vision rooted in national and regional realities."

SAINT LUCIA and BARBADOS called for scientific partnerships and BAHAMAS underscored the need to work together towards decarbonization and a sustainable and equitable blue and green economy. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO called for evidence-based approaches for integrated coastal zone management, and, with MEXICO, stressed access to donor funding and climate finance of developing countries. GUYANA urged moving away from official development assistance to manage ocean resources.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION stressed the need to stop the production and use of single-use plastics and, with BRAZIL, supported a legally-binding agreement on plastic pollution.

SOLOMON ISLANDS highlighted electronic monitoring plans to deter IUU fishing. CYPRUS supported the Barcelona Convention emissions control area for sulphur oxides, and with CROATIA, discussed land-based pollution. The NETHERLANDS outlined the 2020 North Sea Agreement as part of its sustainable blue economy ambitions.

ZIMBABWE lamented that landlocked countries have limited ocean access, in spite of UNCLOS stipulations, and called on rich nations to accelerate greenhouse gas emissions reductions. MALDIVES pointed to a national phase-out plan for single-use plastic and a plan to protect 20% of their marine area and, with MOZAMBIQUE, raised challenges of financial limitations. SWEDEN noted the need for "new blue capital" to invest in the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, and announced USD 5 million to prevent an oil spill off the coast of Yemen.

IRELAND shared commitments, *inter alia*, to expand marine protected areas to reach 30% and obtain 5gW of offshore renewable energy by 2030; and pledge EUR 10 million for international ocean action to support a research partnership with SIDS.

UK highlighted commitments to double climate finance to GBP 11.6 billion, spending a third on nature-based solutions with GBP 500 million invested in the Blue Planet Fund; and invest GBP 154 million into the new coast programme helping vulnerable communities adapt to climate change.

MARSHALL ISLANDS stressed the need for zero-emissions shipping by 2030, with the imposition of a USD 100 carbon levy by 2025; and called for strengthened labor protection measures for sustainable fisheries. VANUATU shared that a coalition of the willing has proposed to lodge a case at the International Court of Justice to protect vulnerable nations from climate change.

JAPAN reported USD 24 million in new voluntary commitments has been registered and ALGERIA announced three additional voluntary commitments, including on marine protected areas.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA highlighted progress in MPAs and noted the International Maritime Organization's recognition of the country's particularly sensitive sea areas (PSSAs).

### Interactive Dialogues

**Promoting and strengthening sustainable ocean-based economies, in particular for SIDS and Least Developed Countries (LDCs):** Co-Chair Espen Barth Eide, Norway, noted "ground-breaking" progress, including agreements on plastic pollution and fisheries subsidies. Co-Chair Abraão Vicente, Cabo Verde, emphasized investing in ocean security, science and research.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, WTO Director-General, highlighted the WTO's recent Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, saying, "without global solidarity we cannot solve problems of the global commons."

Mari Pangestu, World Bank, outlined blue economy benefits for livelihoods, the environment, and economic growth. Usha-Rao Monari, UN Development Programme (UNDP), highlighted the need for regulatory and institutional reform, and increased internal and external investment.

Sanda Ojiambo, Executive Director, UN Global Compact, said a well-managed ocean could generate more than 12 million new jobs and contribute to 21% of emission reductions. Ricardo Mourinho Félix, European Investment Bank, valued the benefits of public-private partnerships for an equitable and just transition towards a net-zero economy by 2050. Danny Faure, Chairman, Danny Faure Foundation, and Former President of Seychelles, called for strengthening food security, restoring and building resilience for planetary health, and creating sustainable and equitable livelihoods.

FIJI, on behalf of the PACIFIC ISLAND FORUM, stressed that their governments do not need scientific reports to tell us oceans are at risk. "We can see it and feel it; the ocean crisis is coming."

TONGA called for the full recognition of the special circumstances of SIDS. Antigua and Barbuda, for the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS), stressed implementing the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) for SIDS instead of using GDP to determine access to financing.

ARUBA described bans on plastics and a regional management plan for mangroves, sea grass, and coral reefs. BELIZE announced their expectation of reaching 30% marine protected areas before 2030. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO highlighted an integrated approach to coastal and marine spatial planning, and lamented the anachronistic approach to financing for SIDS. SWEDEN said the ocean is key to poverty reduction and supported strengthening regional capacity. The AFRICAN UNION announced the establishment of a high-level African Commission on the ocean.

MALDIVES said high taxes penalize sustainability efforts and called for implementing the MVI. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC highlighted marine spatial planning efforts and the need for blue finance, such as debt swaps, blue bonds, and taxes on tourism.

IRELAND described commitments of almost EUR 10 million, under the World Bank Blue Economy programme to address impacts of sea level rise, drinking water, and coastal erosion. FAO, MEXICO and CHINA showcased projects demonstrating the ocean as a source of wealth.

INDIA urged unlocking tailored resources, new development options in digital space and the blue economy. The OCEAN RISK AND RESILIENCE ACTION ALLIANCE advised delegations to spearhead the development of a new finance architecture. PAPUA NEW GUINEA called for scientific collaboration addressing impacts of climate change and SINGAPORE advised strengthening institutional capacities. PORTUGAL reminded to go beyond the "false notion" of incompatibility of environmental protection and economic growth.

**Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems:** Ximena Fuentes, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chile, opened the session calling to strengthen the social dimension of sustainable development. Tanya Plibersek, Environment and Water, Australia, urged acting seriously, cleverly, and immediately on climate change. Moderator Isabella Lövin, Stockholm Environment Institute, said progress has been made but not enough, noting the absence of an operational definition of marine ecosystem health.

Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, said the unprecedented level of attention on oceans, the availability of proven tools and approaches, and this historical gathering set the tone for the final stage of negotiations for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Martha Rojas-Urrego, Secretary-General, RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands, prioritized, *inter alia*, an integrative ridge-to-reef approach; using area-based measures; and increasing participation and equity.

Zhang Zhanhai, Ministry of Natural Resources, China, offered examples of protection and restoration projects, including a satellite ocean monitoring project that shares data with 20 other countries. Marco Lambertini, Director General, WWF International, promoted ocean conservation and delegating management rights to local communities in coastal areas.

Torgny Holmgren, Chief Executive Officer of Stockholm International Water Institute, shared how a downstream approach could help coastal ecosystem management through increased understanding of the effects of mismanaged resources. Mami Mizutori, Head, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, urged including disaster risk into decision-making, reminding delegates that only 40% of developing countries have early warning systems in place.

MONACO emphasized local solutions, and innovative funding tools and technology. Fiji, speaking for the PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM, called for support for capacity building and finance, saying, "If you breathe oxygen, you have a stake in the Pacific's future." BELIZE described how they restructured their national debt to support marine conservation. Vanuatu, for PSIDS, offered the Pacific's traditional "taboo" approach as an example of successful marine protected area management.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA highlighted progress in creating a network of protected areas. IUCN highlighted other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). THE NETHERLANDS emphasized evidence-based ocean policy and cooperation among government, private sector, and civil society. FRENCH POLYNESIA emphasized the need for more sharing of both scientific and traditional knowledge. NORWAY also stressed the need to act on shared knowledge.

TIMOR-LESTE spoke about including mangrove conservation in vulnerable coastal areas. The AUSTRALIAN SEAWEED INSTITUTE shared different ways seaweed can be used to help marine and coastal ecosystems. SPAIN affirmed their commitment to have 30% of marine protected areas by 2030.

INDONESIA recommended a multi-level governance approach for the protection and sustainable use of marine ecosystems. ECUADOR said that being a country rich in biodiversity is a privilege and a responsibility towards future generations. CUBA reminded of the common but different responsibilities of states in ocean protection.

The US described how subnational governments in the US adopted marine spatial planning in advance of national action. GREECE shared their sustainable island initiative, focused on a green economy, energy autonomy, digital innovation and ecological mobility.

### In the Corridors

Tuesday brought a sense of pressure to move from talk to action. Several delegations seemed frustrated at the seemingly endless "blah-blah," in the face of "the coming ocean catastrophe." One exasperated participant said, "the ocean we depend on is dying right now, not in a few years, but now." The day was also filled with new and renewed voluntary commitments, tallying tens of millions of dollars dedicated to ocean action around the world. "Maybe we just need to connect the dots better," opined one delegate, pointing at the discrepancy.

As is becoming common in these types of meetings, in Lisbon, veteran speakers also talked about the importance of young people, but several delegates pointed out that youth representatives were missing. Groups of young people, very present at recent multilateral conferences—particularly in Stockholm+50—remind seasoned delegates that more words will not help to fight the triple planetary crisis. "Perhaps if more young people were present in Lisbon, they would push us to talk less, and do more," quipped one participant.

## UN Ocean Conference Highlights: Wednesday, 29 June 2022

Wednesday marked the mid-point of the second UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal. Delegates met in plenary to hear general statements and participated in two interactive dialogues which also convened during the day.

### General Debate

HSH Prince Albert, Monaco, shared initiatives such as: the MedFund providing EUR 20.5 million for sustainable marine biodiversity conservation; and the Beyond Plastic Med initiative providing EUR 1.3 million for 69 projects in 15 countries.

Pakistan, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/CHINA), stressed that to mobilize the required means of implementation to accelerate the achievement of SDG 14, the world needs an institutional framework such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for the ocean.

GREECE announced a partnership with the US to host the ninth Our Ocean Conference in 2024. GABON reported 26% marine protected area (MPA) coverage and called for a “blue REDD+ programme” to address seagrass degradation. ISRAEL announced plans to declare the Palmachim Disturbance as an MPA. PANAMA shared goals to make the Panama Canal carbon neutral by 2030; finalize the national action plan for marine litter; and increase MPAs by 40% by 2030. ECUADOR highlighted the addition of the Hermandad MPA to the Galápagos protected area. COMOROS warned that the number of climate migrants would increase unless the world takes tangible climate action, with CUBA announcing their climate mitigation “Life Task Plan.”

GEORGIA, IRAQ, and several others expressed readiness to join global efforts to establish a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution by 2024.

ITALY called on others to join the Blue Leaders initiative, sharing the launch of a restoration programme with EUR 400 million. CHILE called for cooperation in the establishment of additional marine protected corridors. AUSTRALIA emphasized the need to lift up Indigenous voices, sharing ambition to reach zero emissions by 2050 and protect 30% of land and sea by 2030. VENEZUELA affirmed indivisibility of all SDGs and reiterated commitment to achieve goals.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA described efforts to scale up investment in ocean renewable and hydrogen energy production. SAUDI ARABIA highlighted a 2020 research and development programme on coral. OMAN noted the creation of 13 MPAs. TURKIYE highlighted a “zero waste blue project” addressing marine pollution. PAKISTAN highlighted, among others, the planting of 7.5 million mangroves along the country’s coastline.

MADAGASCAR shared plans for a meteorological system to enhance climate resilience among fisherfolk. TUVALU called for international support to ensure that the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of Pacific-island nations are not affected by sea-level rise. BENIN highlighted the value of scientific research and its national strategy for development of the blue economy.

NEPAL underlined the need to fully implement the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) alongside the SDGs and Paris Agreement. SPAIN underscored the value of sustainable fishing, and ESTONIA confirmed plans to address marine pollution from industrial and pharmaceutical hazardous waste.

JAMAICA noted action to address plastic pollution and committed to designating a further 10% of their marine area as protected. SRI LANKA highlighted their leadership role in the Action Group on Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods, which may soon include ethical carbon trading.

The EUROPEAN COMMISSION announced 50 voluntary contributions worth EUR 7 billion, including EUR 1 billion to protect high seas biodiversity. The PHILIPPINES discussed their 2021 national plan of action on marine litter. SENEGAL called for implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, and the Convention on Biological Diversity to effectively address ocean threats.

KIRIBATI underlined that the “fishing for profit” mindset has led to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, highlighting that it is “one of the greatest threats to ocean health and wealth.” IRAN called to address ocean pollution by military fleets. CANADA announced 20 new voluntary contributions, including CAD 1.7 million to address IUU fishing in developing countries. LUXEMBOURG announced a recently-launched Blue Natural Capital Fund Facility for blue economy investments. LATVIA highlighted the role of the Baltic Sea Action Plan in addressing ocean threats.

EGYPT expressed hope that COP 27 outcomes will take into account the need for ocean action. TUNISIA prioritized a plastic-free coastline, and among others, called for greater cooperation to implement national action plans. The GAMBIA described their commitment to banning single use plastics, as well as fighting IUU fishing.

HOLY SEE underlined the need for an integrated, human-centered approach to environmental protection. UKRAINE called for international cooperation and coordination to protect humanity and nature. MALTA announced that they would prioritize the climate-ocean-security nexus at the UN Security Council.

SLOVENIA renewed their commitment of 30% protection of global land and sea by 2030. POLAND shared their interest to develop offshore renewable energy and address marine pollution. BOLIVIA reiterated that the ocean is the common heritage of humankind, calling for fair distribution of marine genetic resources.

MAURITIUS reported the planting of 400,000 mangroves to restore degraded ecosystems, and shared plans to establish a new MPA in the Chagos Archipelago. The UK registered their ongoing jurisdiction over this area.

BELGIUM expressed optimism to turn the tide on ocean degradation by achieving the 30 x 30 target related to protected areas, and with SOUTH AFRICA, the FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA and others, finalizing negotiations on the agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations. EL SALVADOR underlined the importance of scientific data and financial resources to achieve SDG 14, emphasizing meaningful inclusion of women, youth and Indigenous Peoples for innovative solutions.

LATIN AMERICA DEVELOPMENT BANK announced USD 1.25 billion over five years in direct funding to promote, *inter alia*, the blue economy, marine and coastal ecosystems recovery, and blue carbon.

### Interactive Dialogues

**Ocean acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming:** Co-Chair John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, US, announced: joining the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (OA Alliance); the initiative on Green Shipping Challenge, with Norway; and USD 15 billion over five years for climate change adaptation in developing countries.

Co-Chair Matthew Samuda, Minister, Office of the Prime Minister, Jamaica, highlighted vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), noting lack of political will and capacity and funding gaps, saying 50% of Jamaica's energy will come from renewable sources by 2030.

Moderator Stephen Widdicombe, Plymouth Marine Laboratory, emphasized the scale and speed at which climate change impacts are accelerating and the urgent need to scale up ocean action.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director-General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), shared research on the marine environment that, *inter alia*, uses nuclear techniques, demonstrates how acidification impacts marine life, and assesses coastal area carbon sequestration capacity.

Johan Stander, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), underscored the need for accessible information and data for ocean action, pointing to the Southern Ocean as an under-sampled area. Jessie Turner, Director, OA Alliance, called for more multilateral funding to study ocean acidification.

Hans Otto-Pörtner, Co-Chair, IPCC Working Group II, highlighted contributions to the Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC, including that: warm water corals have surpassed adaptation limits and global and regional risk analyses provide orientation for action. Inti Keith, Charles Darwin Foundation, Ecuador, described restoring coral reefs of the Galápagos Islands, saying if not done now, we will not have any coral reefs left.

Loreley Picourt, Executive Director, Ocean Climate Platform, *inter alia*, encouraged countries to increase ambition and ocean-based actions under their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), create enabling conditions, leverage funding, and evaluate how we can do better.

During discussions, Marshall Islands, for the PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (PSIDS), called for a significant increase in funding for PSIDS. SWEDEN announced, *inter alia*: its contribution of SEK 14 million to IOC-UNESCO for the Decade of Ocean Science.

ICELAND recalled past major mass extinctions from ocean acidification, calling for more action on climate mitigation. FINLAND shared lessons learned from scientific studies in the Baltic Sea.

UNFCCC reminded that the Paris Agreement is an essential legal tool to protect the ocean, calling Parties to show how they put it to work. TIMOR-LESTE asked developing countries to take the lead in establishing a Loss and Damage financial facility. TANZANIA reflected on the combined impacts of ocean acidification on mangroves, coral reefs and economic activities.

VIET NAM and TURKIYE highlighted the value of monitoring and evaluating the state of the ocean. SAVE THE WAVES COALITION discussed focusing on areas where iconic waves overlap with biodiversity hotspots and their efforts to create a network of MPAs and national policies with a goal of protecting 1,000 ecosystems by 2030.

SPAIN pointed to a multiplatform observation system and boosting artificial intelligence technology. IOC-UNESCO reflected on providing observational and scientific evidence on ocean acidification and deoxygenation, and THE OCEAN FOUNDATION shared examples of their work. OCEANIUM highlighted the potential to replace resource-intensive food production with seaweed.

WMO-IOC noted that the capacity to monitor ocean content and warming remains marginal for ocean acidification and deoxygenation. The ACADEMY OF FISHERIES AND MARINE SCIENCE highlighted abrupt drops in biodiversity experienced by small-scale fisheries.

OCEAN VISIONS spoke of research efforts focused on removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the air and water to increase the capacity of the ocean to store carbon and ZERO-ASSOCIAÇÃO SISTEMA TERRESTRE SUSTENTÁVEL proposed renewable fuel use and modernizing port infrastructure.

**Making fisheries sustainable and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets:** Co-Chair Derek Klazen, Minister, Fisheries and Marine Resources, Namibia, shared Namibia's protection of fish stocks through policies that restrict trolling and longlining within a 200m isobath. Co-Chair Lawrence Hanson, Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, highlighted actions on ghost gear, and capacity building efforts to stop IUU fishing.

Gim Huay Neo, World Economic Forum, emphasized that artisanal fisheries are blue food systems that address inclusion, accessibility to food, nutrition, and environmental sustainability.

Qu Dongyu, Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), said oceans, rivers, and lakes can feed the world only if managed responsibly, equitably, and sustainably.

Henry Puna, Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), described efforts to address overfishing, participate on regional fisheries councils, and implement the Agreement on Port State Measures to reduce IUU fishing.

Shakuntala Thilsted, WorldFish, listed international instruments for small scale fisheries, such as the FAO State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Discussion Paper on the role of aquatic foods and the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. Santiago Wills, Chair, WTO Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations, highlighted the conclusion of the WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies as the first legally-binding agreement on ocean sustainability.

Elisa Morgera, Director, One Ocean Hub, shared research on a human rights-based approach to small scale fisheries and marine resources to implement SDG 14. Editrudith Lukanga, Co-President, World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, pointed to the Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries as a positive approach to secure sustainable small-scale fisheries, with the AFRICAN UNION emphasizing the need to implement the guidelines and ensure that women are represented and recognized.

PAKISTAN, for G-77/CHINA, encouraged the exchange of best practices including through south-south and triangular cooperation. SOLOMON ISLANDS, for PSIDS, supported the WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies, the BBNJ process, and ecosystem-based approaches for fisheries management.

FRENCH POLYNESIA, for the PIF, called for increased investment and research for a blue food system. NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION highlighted their use of area-based measures to protect vulnerable species and strict monitoring to ensure control and enforcement of their management measures.

CABO VERDE emphasized the potential benefits of transitioning from artisanal to small-scale fishing including allowing vessels to operate in wider areas. INDONESIA described a project that helped a small-scale tuna fishery obtain certification of fair-trade tuna, and other policies to empower small scale fisheries.

An artisanal woman fisher, with COSTA HUMBOLDT, called for empowering women through equal access to land and sea, processing facilities, capacity building and investment.

### In the Corridors

Depending on where you stood on Wednesday, the atmosphere was completely different. In the formal meeting rooms, with the air conditioning cranked up, the mood was chilly and muted. Familiar comments and statements were offered and important voluntary commitments announced, but the response seemed lacklustre. Outside the plenary room, warmth and hope emanated from participants in side-event rooms, energized by multiple examples of partnerships and actions from around the world working to save the ocean. "We're really moving the needle here," gushed one delegate.

But under a warm Lisbon sun at the end of the day, the atmosphere was charged: street protesters shouted messages: "Voluntary commitments are not commitments" and, "The ocean is rising and so are we," expressing their disdain or anger at the work from inside the conference center. "It feels like we're attending very different meetings," one delegate shouted over the trans-music from the love+freedom protest box. The question that remained was how to reconcile all the different sentiments, and really #SaveOurOcean.

## UN Ocean Conference Highlights: Thursday, 30 June 2022

On the penultimate day of the second UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, delegates met in plenary to hear general statements and participated in two interactive dialogues which also convened during the day.

### General Debate

Several delegations indicated their support for concluding negotiations towards a new agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), as well as their support for a new treaty to address plastic pollution. Many also shared their progress fulfilling their 2017 voluntary commitments.

President Emmanuel Macron, France, reviewed progress on commitments and encouraged tangible results through systematic action frameworks, highlighting EU decisions on climate goals for 2030 and 2050 and reporting intent to co-host the UN Ocean Conference in 2025 with Costa Rica.

BULGARIA highlighted their investment in marine biodiversity conservation. CAMEROON called for an inclusive blue economy fund. FINLAND announced 11 voluntary commitments worth EUR 100 million and the COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT announced the Blue Charter Report Project Incubator with the target to incubate 30 country-led ocean solutions.

COSTA RICA highlighted their work in the GloLitter Partnership Project, and on the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People. CÔTE D'IVOIRE highlighted, *inter alia*, the country's focus on sustainable fisheries, including annual no-take periods and VIET NAM emphasized the need for partnerships, new technologies and tools.

HAITI called for urgent action to address, among others, ocean acidification, overfishing, and ocean dead zones. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC underlined cost-effective, ecosystem approaches, prioritizing nature-based solutions for coordinated ocean action. NIGERIA stressed the importance of meeting the 30X30 commitment to restore the health and resilience of the ocean.

YEMEN sounded the alarm about a potential oil spill from the FSO Safer in the Red Sea, which contains over 1 million barrels of oil. NAURU shared the challenges of small island development States (SIDS) and called on developed countries to take responsibility for historical climate change. PACIFIC ISLAND FORUM reflected leadership in providing blue Pacific solutions, underscoring the need to address nuclear safety measures and waste management.

CAMBODIA highlighted their designation of a marine protected area (MPA) covering 405 square kilometers. COOK ISLANDS reported on the 2017 designation of the Moare Moana marine park, entirely covering their 1.9 million square kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ). SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS reported on the country's marine management area. FRENCH POLYNESIA asserted islands are a source of opportunity and solutions, outlining alternative development that values traditional

knowledge and solidarity between generations, highlighting the commitment to 1 million sq km of ocean.

ARMENIA noted the country's partnership with UNESCO on a communication campaign for a new generation of effective change makers, including for the oceans. BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION highlighted, *inter alia*: Blueing the Black Sea GEF Regional project to address pollution and blue economy investments; and Virtual Blue Career Center to promote synergies in the region.

BANGLADESH emphasized capacity development as paramount to generate, integrate and render accessible ocean data, information and knowledge. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES committed to, *inter alia*, focus on ecosystem restoration by planting 100 million mangroves by 2030, and establishing a marine innovation park as a center of excellence for science and research.

UN EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO) welcomed the Framework of Ocean Decade Alliance and reported 160 actions for transformative science in every ocean basin in the world. NIPPON FOUNDATION reviewed efforts to strengthen training opportunities of SIDS, particularly of young researchers.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS called for a paradigm shift, reclassifying SIDS to large ocean countries. The NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION called for coordinated partnerships and INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL called for new ways for self-organizing, bottom-up learning and impact networks to share ocean openly.

INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY recalled the General Assembly decision to maintain the deep seabed beyond national jurisdiction as the common heritage of humankind.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) explained that oceans, rivers and lakes can feed the world only if they are "valued responsibly, sustainably and equitably," pointing to the Blue Transformation Roadmap 2022-2030. OCEANO AZUL FOUNDATION called on government leaders to put in place legal binding protocols.

Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of Marine Environment Including Socioeconomic Aspects highlighted bridging the science policy interface through briefs and assessments relevant to decision makers, as well as building capacity in ocean governance.

COMUNIDAD Y BIODIVERSIDAD called for democratizing science and incorporating a human rights-based approach, sharing their plan for a sustainable fisheries app, reaching 300,000 people in Latin America by 2030.

UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS appealed to make explicit in the UN Ocean Conference declaration the knowledge and experiences of local and regional governments for sustainable management models.

The AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION discussed the African Blue Economy Strategy to promote the development of marine resources. THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY highlighted the recent launch of the Nuclear

TECHNOLOGY for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics), to monitor and track plastic in the ocean and improve recycling rates. ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN, AND PACIFIC STATES drew attention to their Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture. UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (UN-ESCAP) noted their provision of technical assistance and climate finance in support of ocean action.

INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY, with the CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP, WORLD OCEAN NETWORK and the CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH OF PEACE, CARITAS OCEANIA and others, joined calls for a moratorium on seabed mining. GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD INITIATIVE called for the ratification of the Agreement on Port State Measures to address IUU fishing.

MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF SAINT COLUMBAN lamented the absence at this Conference of many Pacific Island people, especially women, and urged they be invited as guests at future ocean conferences. HEIRS TO OUR OCEANS underscored the need for intergenerational equity, calling for lowering the conference registration age to 15. EARTH ECO INTERNATIONAL underlined the need for youth leadership in conservation decision making.

CONSEIL DES INNU DE EKUANITSHIT called for better protection of MPAs and migratory species and GREENX TELEMECHANICS LIMITED said it is “time for the world to wake up.”

BRAZILIAN HUMPBACK WHALE INSTITUTE called for the voice of civil society to be heard first, not last and BLUE VENTURES emphasized, *inter alia*, listening to fishers, securing their preferential access rights, and prioritizing local food and job security.

STIFTELSEN STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE encouraged, *inter alia*, local to global actions to increase investment in science and education, include all stakeholders and innovate transformative, replicable, scalable solutions.

GLOBAL GHOST GEAR INITIATIVE applauded the IMO decision on mandatory marking of fishing gear. SAILORS FOR THE SEA JAPAN pointed to their Blue Seafood Guide. UNA PUNTA CINCO highlighted the commitment to ocean action of the Regional Climate Conference of Youth in Latin America.

OCEANCARE called to recognize ocean noise as marine pollution and ban ocean-floor drilling operations. POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES supported global ocean literacy programmes. GLOBAL OCEAN BIODIVERSITY INITIATIVE called attention to their work in marine science including the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas.

The NETWORK OF MPA MANAGERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN called for a new global alliance to boost MPA financing. The SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY ON OCEAN RESEARCH highlighted work to promote networking across all ocean science disciplines. OCEAN CONSERVANCY stressed that ocean action commitments need to be accompanied by sustainable finance and comprehensive implementation plans.

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL flagged need for sustainable fishing for a blue food revolution, pledge that the proportion of catch from oceans will expand to be a third of global catch by 2030. UPWELL TURTLES pledged USD 750,000 over two years to monitor critically endangered Pacific leatherback turtle populations.

ØRSTED affirmed the potential of an energy transition using offshore wind. BLUEBIO ALLIANCE spoke on scaling ocean action through innovative technologies. LIVE OCEAN drew attention to the Voices of a Healthy Ocean Declaration, and pledged to support science partnerships and solutions.

EDP GROUP announced plans to expand renewable energy provision in Europe by 2025. BLUE FOREST called for improved satellite imagery to monitor mangroves and strengthening of private sector financing for to expand mangrove forests.

RARE noted mayoral actions to establish no-take zones in the coral triangle and in meso-America to encourage sustainable fisheries. NATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHY CENTRE, UK called for the promotion of the ocean-biodiversity nexus, and for the enhancement of marine scientific research, noting the importance of an underwater ocean sensing network.

MUN IMPACT emphasized the need for courage to “walk the unconventional path” to confront the threats to the ocean, including by promoting ocean education for youth, women, Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable groups. INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SOCIALIST YOUTH called for a ban on bottom trawling, and a ban on deep seabed mining.

CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY highlighted a new MPA grounded in traditional knowledge and laws and supported by a robust management plan on indigenous lands.

SWEN BLUE OCEAN called attention to the Blue Ocean Impact Fund to support entrepreneurial ventures supporting ocean actions.

### *Interactive Dialogues*

**Increasing scientific knowledge and developing research capacity and transfer of marine technology:** Co-Chair Amélie de Montchalin, Minister, Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion, France, opened the dialogue, underscoring the need to share ocean science. Co-Chair Franz Tattenbach, Minister, Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, said ocean science allows us to understand human impacts and take tangible action, including meeting national voluntary commitments.

Moderator Margaret Leinen, Director, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, called for greater ambition, including for a 21st century ocean observation system.

Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary, IOC-UNESCO, noted that ocean science receives only 1.7% of research funding even though the ocean covers 70% of the planet. Jane Lubchenco, US, said the world needs science to save itself from fantasy and called for a new narrative that moves from “the ocean is too big to fix” to “the ocean is too big to ignore.”

Peter de Menocal, President, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, emphasized understanding the oceans’ ability to absorb carbon and prioritizing collective benefits for mankind. Hide Sakaguchi, President, Ocean Policy Research Institute of Sasakawa Peace Foundation, highlighted technology that minimizes human impact, explaining that smart fishing systems yield the required volume of fish at the required time.

Cameron Diver, The Pacific Community, New Caledonia, said investment in marine technology, including research vessels, is critical to Pacific states’ scientific sovereignty. Ratih Pangestuti, National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia, emphasized including indigenous communities in scientific cruises, and increasing ocean literacy and citizen science.

In the discussion, Antigua and Barbuda, for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said they “remember the commitments and wait patiently for them to materialize only to be disappointed,” and invited countries to join the “Declaration for the enhancement of marine scientific knowledge, research capacity and transfer of marine technology to SIDS.”

PORTUGAL called for an integrated approach that addresses pollution from land and sea sources, and a shift to a blue mind to work with, not against the ocean.

GUATEMALA, with AOSIS, Tuvalu, for the PSIDS, TANZANIA, ARGENTINA, BANGLADESH, US, and Pakistan, for the G-77/CHINA, called for technology and knowledge transfer to tackle disparities in achieving SDG targets.

UN-ESCAP shared their commitment to convening governments to enhance regional cooperation on ocean work. CHILE underscored the importance of science, monitoring and clear reporting to meet ocean commitments. SWEDEN highlighted the importance of marine spatial planning. OCEAN NETWORKS CANADA highlighted Indigenous Peoples’ participation in the blue economy.



EU shared their objective to become the first carbon-neutral continent in the world. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC stressed the value of South-South cooperation.

GLOBAL FISHING WATCH shared its efforts to make publicly available knowledge about ocean-related human activities.

SPAIN supported collaboration, capacity building, partnerships, and training and research in strategic countries. CANADA outlined their use of marine technologies. CHINA and EUROGOOS talked about the importance of engaging with many countries to promote knowledge sharing. ALGERIA called for information on the knowledge gaps of African countries.

**Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):**

Co-Chair Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson, Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate, Iceland, called UNCLOS one of the world's greatest achievements, giving us stability and predictability and contributing to peace and security, even though threats such as acidification were not known to its drafters. Co-Chair Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore, said UNCLOS strikes the right balance—enabling economic growth and protecting the marine environment.

Calling UNCLOS a robust and enduring framework, Alexander Tudhope, University of Edinburgh, UK, also noted that the state of the ocean has declined over the forty years since its passage and asked how we implement international law for the benefit of future generations.

Michael Lodge, Secretary-General, International Seabed Authority, said UNCLOS stands as a test for multilateralism and cautioned that mandates be respected, not undermined.

Vladimir Jares, Director of Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, reflected on the benefits of implementing international law on promoting science and innovation, and, on the other hand, the essential role of science in global policy making. He called for enhanced capacity of states to participate in international ocean governance, as well as in implementing international agreements.

Jia Yu, Deputy Director-General, Institute for Marine Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources, China, shared several examples on how China complies with international instruments for the benefit of ecosystems and international cooperation.

Rena Lee, President, BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), hailed UNCLOS as the anchor and foundation of the work of the IGC and hoped that the outcome instrument will include processes that establish how different actors will interact with one another.

Mārtiņš Pāparinskis, University College London, noted challenges associated with sea level rise and maritime boundaries, and highlighted the potential for UNCLOS as a platform for harmonization of states' rights and obligations, also noting the importance of advisory opinions by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

Jakob Granit, Director General, Agency for Marine and Water Management, Sweden, and Chair, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, emphasized sustained investment in ocean management, regional collaboration, and marine spatial planning.

Vanuatu, on behalf of PSIDS, called for targeted cooperation and coordination on implementation of UNCLOS and called for support of the Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise. VANUATU underscored the obligations of states to protect the rights of present and future generations against adverse effects of climate change.

VIET NAM called for full implementation of UNCLOS. ECUADOR reminded delegates that UNCLOS was not intended to be static law, but a living framework that could be developed and amplified through agreements. TIMOR-LESTE stressed the importance of sovereignty of seas for SIDS, noting that UNCLOS has provided tools to finalize maritime boundaries.

The PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM said UNCLOS is the blueprint for the rights and entitlements of their people and identified nuclear contamination as a danger to the sustainable use of oceans and conservation of marine ecosystems.

FINLAND called for the establishment of MPAs and the protection of the high seas. ARGENTINA said UNCLOS is in good shape because its “organs are in good condition,” and highlighted the needs of developing countries for achieving the SDGs. ISRAEL asked for “zero tolerance” against marine environmental offenders.

The INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL called out countries that exploit marine resources in developing country territories, offering as an example, fisheries in Cabo Verde, where the country must invest in conservation but receives little of the profits from the fisheries.

BANGLADESH recalled that implementing ocean science will be challenging for developing countries who lack capacity and technology.

UK spoke about establishing partnerships and commitments to fund diverse projects in support of the ocean. FRENCH POLYNESIA cited their longstanding efforts to protect the ocean and called for a high-seas protected area. The PHILIPPINES shared that actions by a neighboring country had damaged their marine environment and that UNCLOS provided a mechanism for recourse. WOMEN4OCEANS noted that biodiversity and climate change were not concerns when UNCLOS was adopted and, with WWF and YOUTH FOR EUROPE, called for a moratorium on deep seabed mining.

CHILE favored swift action to conclude the BBNJ process and, for ISA, said a 15-year moratorium would be rational to allow for development of scientific norms in light of knowledge gaps. On plastic pollution, INDONESIA supported establishment of a global agreement and said reduction targets must be credible, inclusive and science based.

FAO outlined its role in fisheries fora and agreements, and tracking progress under SDG 14. IUCN urged completing the BBNJ negotiations in 2022. YOUTH FOR EUROPE said decisions made today directly affect our future and called for active inclusion in ocean governance decisions.

In his final remarks, Co-Chair Balakrishnan recalled that the oceans were here before us and will be here after us, explaining that the reasons for ocean law are really about human wellbeing.

### *In the Corridors*

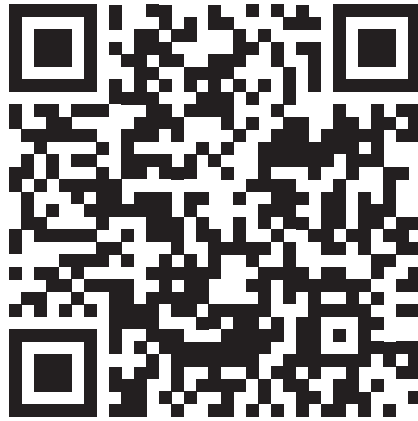
With a day left to go at the second UN Ocean Conference, delegates managed to complete the general debate, with non-state actors taking the spotlight in a near-empty plenary hall. Their clear voices filled the void, with strong calls for a moratorium on deep seabed mining. “We cannot afford the risk,” shared one youth delegate, “we are in the midst of a climate crisis that could be worsened by drilling into the seabed.”

Others fixated on the “injustice” of being cut off mid-sentence during the general debate. “There is nobody here to hear us anyway,” said one exasperated participant, “why not just allow us to really share our views?” Another queried why those “actually doing the work” were allocated less speaking time than “those only outlining plans to do the work.” “I would give the UN a one-star rating for their commitment to stakeholder participation,” said one delegate.

In the dialogues, one voice pierced through the dense sessions, directly warning that decisions made (on seabed mining) will affect their future for decades to come. A poignant reminder was given by one co-chair in closing who said the ocean was here before we existed and will be here after we are gone. Our laws to protect the ocean are really about protecting the wellbeing of humankind.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of the UN Ocean Conference will be available on Monday, 4 July 2022 at [enb.iisd.org/2022-un-ocean-conference](http://enb.iisd.org/2022-un-ocean-conference)

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