United Nations **ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION**

General Assembly

Distr.: General
29 April 2022

Original: English

2022 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Lisbon, Portugal, 26 June-1 July 2022
Item xx of the provisional agenda*
Interactive dialogues

Interactive Dialogue 8: Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Concept paper by the Secretariat

Summary

The present paper was prepared in response to paragraph 23 of General Assembly resolution 73/292, which requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to prepare concept papers on each of the themes of the interactive dialogues, taking into account the relevant ocean-related processes of the General Assembly and other possible contributions. This is the concept paper for interactive dialogue 8, entitled "Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda". The paper outlines the status and trends, challenges and opportunities for the achievement of relevant SDG 14 targets, under the overarching theme of the Conference: "Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions".

I. Introduction

1. In "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", Member States committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, announcing 17 integrated and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[1] None of the goals, including SDG 14, can be achieved in isolation from the others, and progress towards the achievement of one goal entails progress towards the achievement of many others. SDG 14 is linked in various ways to all other SDGs. It is critical to take these links into account when focusing on action taken to achieve SDG 14.[2] For instance, the declaration entitled "Our ocean, our future: call for action", adopted at the 2017 United Nations Ocean Conference, called for an integrated and coordinated approach towards the implementation of Goal 14 and for the promotion of policies and actions that take into account the critical interlinkages and potential synergies between the promotion of SDG 14 and other goals, particularly those with ocean-related targets. This offers tremendous prospects in the fight for a sustainable future in which no one is left behind. This paper is based on input received from Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations system and other stakeholders.[3]

2. Addressing interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs in national implementation opens up new opportunities for governments to secure the sustainable long-term development of the ocean, and to consequently raise the prominence of ocean issues. Incorporating ocean issues into scientific and policy dialogues, and policies related to sustainable development, including those focused on poverty reduction, food security, social justice, gender equality, public health, urban basic services and climate change, can assist not only in achieving these aims but also in promoting actions towards sustainably restoring and maintaining ocean health.

3. This concept paper aims to stimulate discussion concerning how leveraging interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs can help accelerate the implementation of SDG 14. It analyses those interlinkages, and challenges and opportunities in leveraging them. It highlights existing partnerships that have made breakthroughs in harnessing the positive links between SDG 14 and other SDGs, and possible future partnerships.

II. Interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs

4. Interlinkages exist between the SDG 14 targets, and between SDG 14 and other SDGs and their targets. A systematic exploration of these interlinkages contributes to policy coherence as well as multidisciplinary and multisectoral dialogue, while creating a better understanding of where synergies that need to be managed across the implementation of all SDGs.[4] It provides the basis for maximizing mutually beneficial actions at the national and international levels in the long term, creating economies of scale for implementing the SDGs and

[1] A/RES/70/1

[2] https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2017/wp149_2017.pdf

[3] Given word constraints, not all inputs have been included in their entirety, but they can be accessed at https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2022/documentation

[4] https://pure.iiasa.ac.at/id/eprint/14591/1/SDGs-Guide-to-Interactions.pdf

acknowledging and minimizing trade-offs in the achievement of different goals. It also allows governments and other stakeholders to collaborate towards achieving collective and scaled-up impacts across multiple interacting policy domains.[5]

5. At the national level, context matters in determining whether certain linkages and co-benefits are – or can be – realized. Each country is unique in its economic, social, and environmental circumstances, and the measures for integrated implementation likely reflect those circumstances. In practice, SDG interactions must be characterized holistically in specific local, national or regional contexts,[6] to allow for discussion and analysis of scenarios where the interests of multiple stakeholders are acknowledged. The time and spatial scales over which synergies and tradeoffs take place also affect national implementation.[7] For example, intensifying food production and fisheries exploitation to end hunger in places where resources are scarce may be feasible in the short term, but can, over time, deplete fisheries and forests. Investing in measures to restore ocean health and fishery resources will likely provide long-term benefits to food security, while also providing a foundation for the development of national sustainable ocean-based economies.

6. Several studies evaluating the interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs have concluded that all goals are connected with SDG 14, to differing degrees and in differing respects.[8] Interlinkages can exist within a given SDG's targets, between the targets of different SDGs, and between SDGs more generally. The ten SDG 14 targets link to different SDG areas. While some targets have limited or narrow connections to other goals, others link to several different goals and targets in multiple ways.[9] This section will mainly focus on the synergetic interlinkages between SDG14 and other SDGs and is based on inputs received for this theme. Some examples of the interlinkages between SDG14 and other SDGs are as follows.

7. (SDG 1) A healthy, productive and resilient ocean is a critical enabler of poverty alleviation and sustainable economic growth, and contributes to ending income and multidimensional poverty. A healthy ocean can produce approximately $3-6 trillion USD in economic value annually,[10] supporting upwards of 3 billion people.[11] Sustainably managing and protecting the ocean and its ecosystems is key to securing the economic benefits it provides, including in terms of tourism, food, transportation, trade, energy, biotechnology, pharmaceutical development, and coastal protection. Protection, restoration, and management of critical coastal and marine habitats have direct links to poverty eradication, improving livelihoods and reducing vulnerability related to extreme climate events. Sustainable tourism, fisheries, and coastal agriculture in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developing Countries (LDCs) can create employment that reduces income poverty. 120 million people are dependent on fisheries for their livelihoods, almost 97 per cent of those people are in developing countries

[5] Ibid
[6] https://www.nature.com/articles/534320a
[7] https://www.nature.com/articles/534320a
[8] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X17302026
[9] https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2017/wp149_2017.pdf.
[10] https://www.un.org/en/desa/exploring-potential-blue-economy
[11] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/

and more than 90 per cent participate in small-scale fisheries.[12] Shipping also helps in lifting millions of people out of poverty by providing employment, and improved access to basic materials, goods and products. However, while shipping is a large growth business spreading economic and social benefits, it increases carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and pollution, which impact human health (SDG 3). Collectively, increased economic activities aimed at poverty alleviation, if resource-intensive in nature, can create increased and multiple pressures on coastal and marine resources, leading to environmental harm and long-term economic costs.

8. (SDG 2 & 3) The links between fisheries, food security and nutrition (SDG 2), and health and well-being (SDG 3) are well-established. For example, marine protein is a staple in many diets in the Asia-Pacific region, reaching up to 37% of total protein consumption.[13] A healthy, sustainably-managed ocean can significantly contribute to addressing increased food demand from a growing population, which cannot be met by land-based agriculture alone. Seafood is a major factor in food security, with fisheries and aquaculture producing, in 2018, 156 million tonnes of seafood for direct human consumption, an annual average rate of increase of 3.1 percent from 1961 to 2017. Globally, fish provided more than 3.3 billion people with almost 20 percent of their average annual per capita intake of animal protein in 2017.[14]

9. However, the global demand for fish in the absence of appropriate fisheries management contributes to the ongoing depletion of fish stocks and the degradation of marine habitats and ecosystems. Since 2018, the percentage of overexploited fisheries has increased slightly to 34.2% of all wild stocks,[15] highlighting the challenges that still exist with sustainable fisheries management which threaten the achievement of SDGs 2 and 3.

10. The ocean also provides numerous other benefits to human health and well-being in the form of ecosystem services, including climate regulation, resources, and recreational and cultural values. Ecosystems support organisms that can serve as the source of future medicinal products, with cancer, HIV and pain medications from marine sources already having been developed.

11. (SDG 4) Educating the public about the importance of the ocean enhances ocean literacy, which is an important component of an enabling environment for coastal and marine science and management, and creates a link between SDG 4 on education, and SDG 14. Ocean literacy improves societal understanding of the ocean's importance, supporting public demand for its conservation and sustainable use. In addition, improved opportunities for scientific education and developing research capacity better enable developing country scientists to participate in regional and global scientific networks, leading to improved knowledge, capacity and technology for management of coastal and ocean resources both in such countries and more widely. Increasing the capacity of young scientists, particularly women, is important for promoting future innovative research, and for creating a direct link with SDG 5 (see below).

[12] https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en
[13] https://www.fao.org/3/i5151e/i5151e.pdf
[14] https://www.fao.org/3/ca9229en/ca9229en.pdf
[15] https://www.fao.org/3/ca9229en/ca9229en.pdf

Finally, with diverse and sustainable blue economies requiring a well-trained workforce, opportunities for further education are manifold.

12. (SDG 5) The achievement of SDG14 can also contribute to gender equality (SDG 5). The inclusion of women in decision-making, and incorporation of a gender perspective, can result in more effective ecosystem management. However, women usually are not included in decisions regarding the management of coastal and marine resources.[16] In 2016, only one of the top 100 seafood companies was run by a woman. While gender differences in access to resources and opportunities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector are increasingly recognized, there is a need to engage in more meaningful and relevant gender analysis to improve socio-ecological approaches to fisheries research and management. Gender equality is an overarching goal that is crucial, inter alia, to ensuring equal rights of access to marine and coastal resources and related markets. Women represent the majority of people engaged in secondary activities related to marine fisheries and aquaculture, such as fish processing and marketing, and their inclusion in fisheries and marine areas management is important for the success of these measures. Increased training, access to technology, credit and employment opportunities have the potential to promote gender equality in decision-making and to support gainful employment.

13. (SDG 6) Freshwater and saltwater are closely interconnected. The oceans and seas are major sources of water in the hydrological cycle and therefore require coordinated sustainable management through integrated water and coastal management with the involvement of other water actors. Following a basin approach (source-to-sea/ridge-to-reef), ocean sustainability is directly linked to sustainable water management. Preventing marine pollution and reducing sediment run-off from land contribute to improving marine water quality, resulting in healthier coastal and marine ecosystems. Halving the proportion of untreated wastewater (indicator 6.3.1) is likely to relieve fresh and marine water of significant parts of their biochemical oxygen demand and nutrient loads, and greatly contribute to reducing marine pollution and adverse impacts on the marine and coastal environments, and to allowing for their restoration. The implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management on national and transboundary levels therefore has positive effects on sustainable freshwater management and use, and in turn on marine and coastal pollution and ecosystems management (SDGs 14.1 and 14.2), as well as for species migrating within or between freshwater and marine realms. Wetlands also protect water quality by trapping sediments and retaining excess nutrients, carbon and other pollutants, demonstrating a direct linkage between wetland and ocean health.

14. (SDG 7) Increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix and improving energy efficiency, reliability and affordability will enhance sustainability and help reduce ocean acidification through reduced greenhouse gases emissions. The ocean offers ample clean energy opportunities. Various reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlight the ocean's role in many promising avenues for climate change mitigation.[17]

[16] https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Progress-on-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals-The-gender-snapshot-2021-en.pdf

[17] https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/ and https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg3/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf

Windfarms in coastal and marine areas, tidal and wave power, floating solar, and ocean thermal energy conversion are promising technologies, currently at differing levels of development, for non-carbon-based energy production contributing to energy security. Infrastructure foundations can also act as artificial reefs supporting fish populations. Additionally, the maritime sector can contribute to achieving SDG 7 by improving low-carbon energy efficiency in shipping.

15. However, certain technologies could have negative impacts on marine ecosystems and species, such as through affecting underwater or seabird migration patterns or increasing spatial competition with other ocean uses, including for coastal and marine protected areas, fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism. Ocean energy systems, including wave energy and floating solar, may place stress on marine ecological systems, and requires further research and appropriate mitigation. Recent technologies, including large-scale offshore wind farms and submarine power cables, can also impact ocean life. Sourcing of the critical metals required in the construction of some renewable energy technologies may also have environmental impacts, including on deep sea environments and biodiversity, also pointing at the need to further develop a circular economy. Continuous monitoring of environmental impact can help ensure a sustainable future for the ocean.

16. (SDG 8) Globally, 820 million people depend on aquaculture and coastal and maritime tourism for their livelihoods. Fisheries provide livelihoods for the 500 million people involved in the sector and contribute US$235 billion annually to the world economy. This contribution could increase by an additional US$80 billion annually with significant governance reform, including through an approximate 44% reduction in fishing levels.[18] Overfishing creates economic losses, and countering those losses requires governance reform and time for overfished stocks to recover, leading to increased long-term fishing harvests, food security, and job creation. In the shorter term, however, reducing fishing capacity will jeopardize fishers' livelihoods, with an ensuing need for financing and alternative jobs.[19] Thus, the relationship between SDGs 8 and 14 in regards to fisheries is complicated: long-term ecological and economic benefits may require short-term economic sacrifices and associated socio-economic impacts.

17. Sustainable growth of marine and maritime sectors supports employment and economic growth and has great future potential. In the EU, the 'blue' economy represents roughly 5.4 million jobs and a gross added value of almost €500 billion per year.[20] Given the number of jobs in ocean-related activities, the interlinkage of the ocean and decent work and economic growth is a priority for many States, particularly for SIDS which depend heavily on tourism. However, the impacts of COVID-19 have demonstrated that over-reliance on one economic sector, such as tourism, makes countries more vulnerable to external shocks and worsening poverty (SDG 1),[21] while a more diversified economy provides some insulation against

[18] https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24056
[19] Ibid
[20] https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth_en
[21] https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-64-the-covid-19-pandemic-puts-small-island-developing-economies-in-dire-straits/

external shocks, and an increase in skilled opportunities and economic prospects. Thus, most countries' sustainable ocean economy plans include multiple economic sectors, with technology and innovation playing an important role. In all cases, protecting the ocean could itself lead to job creation, directly helping to reduce poverty.

18. For example, tackling marine litter and plastic pollution requires investment in improved solid waste management and recycling, innovation, and the design of new products. One analysis by Pew Charitable Trusts shows that new systems to reduce plastic pollution could lead to 700,000 new jobs in the Global South. New innovations in ocean renewable energy and marine biotechnology can also increase skilled jobs and provide for economic gains, but will require initial financing, capacity and technology. Protection of coastal areas can create new employment opportunities in marine protected areas management, tourism and recreation, and provide benefits to adjacent fisheries, particularly sustainable small-scale and artisanal fisheries. Yet, one of the trade-offs is that protection of coastal areas may, in the short term, affect local employment and the economic growth of those communities with a high fisheries dependence. Efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing will lead to improved sustainability of fishing in the long-term, and can create new jobs in monitoring, control and surveillance.

19. (SDG 9) The need to build green, climate and disaster resilient coastal infrastructure for fisheries, tourism and shipping links SDG 9 to SDG 14. Infrastructure can increase productivity and help SIDS and coastal LDCs increase economic benefits from the use of marine resources, while a sustainable ocean economy can drive improvements to infrastructure and foster innovation. Upgrading infrastructure and retrofitting industries to make them more resilient, and sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency, and greater adoption of clean and environmentally-sound technologies and industrial processes will also contribute to reducing marine pollution and protecting costal and marine ecosystems. Greening the shipping industry and ports, while preserving the role of the maritime transport in supporting future growth, is crucial for ocean and coastal zone protection, with climate change slated to be the main cause of marine ecosystem degradation by 2050.

20. (SDG 10) Increased access to more inclusive markets and to resources for small scale fishers, together with related capacity-building (target 14.b) and technology transfers related to marine science (target 14.a) will help reduce inequities, contributing to the achievement of SDG 10. Development of sustainable blue economies in SIDS, LDCs and coastal African countries can help reduce inequalities between countries, particularly if small-scale fisheries actors along the entire value chain meaningfully participate in the process, and if trade-offs are taken into account, applying a precautionary approach. Fairness, inclusion and equity in the attainment of SDG 14 can be increased through sharing the benefits of marine resource use locally, particularly by supporting participatory resource governance and development processes, local economic and tourism development, capacity-building programmes, and hiring practices.[22]

[22] https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2017/wp149_2017.pdf

21. (SDG 11) Adaptation strategies such as efforts to improve municipal solid waste management (SDG target 11.6) and sanitation (SDG target 6.2) can reduce the risk of water-related disasters (SDG target 11.5) by keeping the urban drainage system clean, while reducing marine pollution and its impacts such as eutrophication, harmful algal blooms and low oxygen conditions (SDG target 14.1).

22. (SDG 12) Sustainable management of natural resources and the reduction of waste are critical for ending overfishing, for sustainably managing marine and coastal ecosystems and for reducing marine pollution. Marine pollution originates from both land-based and sea-based activities including domestic, agricultural, commercial, industrial and fishery activities, and takes different forms, including marine debris, plastics, nutrient pollution, untreated wastewater, solid waste, hazardous substances, ship-sourced pollution, and abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear. A recent report estimates that 75 to 199 million tonnes of plastic is currently found in the oceans. The amount of plastic waste entering aquatic ecosystems could nearly triple from 9-14 million tonnes per year in 2016 to a projected 23-37 million tonnes per year by 2040.[23] Sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) along with availability of sanitation for all (SDG 6) and reduction of the adverse environmental impact of cities (SDG target 11.6), will significantly reduce pollution loads in oceans and marine ecosystems. Research shows that a comprehensive circular economy approach could reduce the volume of plastics entering the ocean by over 80 per cent by 2040 and reduce virgin plastic production by 55 per cent[24]. Promoting sustainable consumption and production in the seafood value chain through, for example, science-based quotas, use of selective fishing gear, and prevention of by-catch and post-harvest loss, also contributes to the conservation of fish stocks, marine life and ecosystems.

23. (SDG 13) The ocean helps regulate the Earth's climate but also suffers immensely from the impacts of climate change. The ocean-climate nexus is therefore an integral part of climate change action. The ocean acts as a giant sink for greenhouse gases and plays a critical role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Marine and coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass meadows and tidal marshes mitigate climate change impacts of through carbon sequestration while providing natural coastal protection. For example, mangroves sequester carbon at rates 3-5 times higher per acre than other tropical rainforests,[25] while simultaneously increasing biodiversity and essential fish habitats.

24. The ocean-related effects of anthropogenic climate change, caused by the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG), have already been severe. As reported by the IPCC, the global ocean has warmed unabated since 1970 and has taken up more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system, while the absorption of CO_2 emissions has led to ocean acidification. Ocean warming together with deoxygenation and acidification, has led to mass coral-bleaching events and shifts in the distribution of marine fish stocks, among other impacts. Furthermore, ocean biogeochemistry has changed, with impacts on the structure of ecosystems, food webs,

[23] https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36963/POLSOL.pdf
[24] https://www.unepfi.org/pollution-and-circular-economy/pollution-and-circular-economy/
[25] https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms4794 (The effectiveness of coral reefs for coastal hazard risk reduction and adaptation)

invasive species and other biotic interactions.[26] Thus, the attainment of SDG 14 is heavily dependent on urgent action towards SDG 13, with the two goals closely interlinked.

25. Reducing carbon emissions and building resilience to the impacts of climate change will assist everyone, and vulnerable ocean-dependent communities in particular, to cope with multiple impacts of climate change. An increasing number of countries are now including ocean issues in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, demonstrating a rising awareness of the potential role of coastal and marine habitats in climate change mitigation.

26. Other ocean-related emissions reduction measures include those undertaken by the maritime transport sector. For instance, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted in 2011, the first global, legally-binding GHG control regime for an entire industry sector, based on technical measures for new ships and operational emission-reduction measures for all ships. Industry innovation is also contributing to emissions reductions through alternative fuels and other measures.

27. Perhaps less well-known are GHG emissions generated by plastic production. During the pandemic, plastic waste has soared globally, with an estimated 25,000 extra tonnes of plastic pollution entering the world's already plastic-infested oceans.[27] Research demonstrates that GHG emissions from the plastic lifecycle could be reduced by 25% by 2040.[28]

28. Rising sea-levels and changing ocean currents and sea surface temperatures have implications for the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events which impact achievement of all seventeen SDGs. Thus, adequate solutions are needed to guarantee resilient and sustainable ocean communities. While measures such as early warning systems and retrofitting coastal infrastructure are critical in mitigating impact, they must be combined with adequate national capacity, policy, legislation/regulations, institutions, infrastructure and awareness-raising for effective disaster risk reduction and management .

29. (SDG 15) Ocean and coastal systems are rich reservoir for biodiversity, and are ecologically, economically and culturally connected to biodiversity on land. Halting the loss of biodiversity on land improves the resilience of ecosystems, and supports healthy and productive oceans downstream. For example, restoration of watershed areas reduces sedimentation and ultimately improves water quality in coastal areas, which benefits species such as corals and reef-dependent fisheries that are sensitive to high sediment levels. This demonstrates that actions to attain SDG 15 can assist in achieving SDG 14. Conversely, unsustainable land-use and associated habitat degradation, and land-based sources of pollution, negatively impact marine areas. In general, life on land, and its interconnections with the ocean, is affected by actions taken with respect to multiple SDGs, driving economic development, sustainable consumption and production, industry and infrastructure, sustainable cities and clean water and sanitation. Where these SDGs are achieved in a way that creates co-benefits

[26] https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/

[27] https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2111530118

[28] https://www.unepfi.org/pollution-and-circular-economy/pollution-and-circular-economy/

for SDGs 14 and 15, additional benefits from healthy ecosystems accrue to many other SDGs, including SDG 3.

30. Last but not least, SDG 16 and SDG 17 underpin the comprehensive implementation of SDG 14. Good governance and strong institutions at local and regional levels are key to turning the potential for synergies into reality. For many, if not all, goals, having in place effective governance systems, institutions, partnerships (SDG 17), and intellectual and financial resources is key to an effective, efficient and coherent approach to implementation.[29] Sustainable development of the ocean requires regulation through transparent, inclusive institutions and robust public/private cooperation. Without good governance and solid institutions any regulatory frameworks or laws protecting the ocean cannot be adequately enforced. For example, effective institutions are important for underpinning the success of coastal and marine management and conservation action, including fisheries management and development of marine protected areas. Strong scientific capacities at governmental and research institutions are critical in setting effective policies (SDG 16).

31. Overall, the achievement of SDG 14 will assist in achieving many of the other SDGs and, ultimately, the entire 2030 Agenda. A healthy and resilient ocean is key to ensuring fundamental ecosystem services for the hundreds of millions of people in coastal, low-lying coastal and island States, but also far inland, and contributes to global food security and economic security for billions of people each year.

III. Challenges and opportunities in leveraging interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs

32. Since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, there has been considerable progress in analyzing interlinkages across goals and targets in a more integrated and holistic way. While this is a necessary first step, action must move towards more systematic policy design, implementation and multi-stakeholder collaborations that can translate such understanding into concrete results on the ground. This section considers some challenges and opportunities in leveraging interlinkages between SDG 14 and the other SDGs, while also identifying some specific areas for targeted action.

33. An integrated approach to implementation of the SDGs would require the involvement of a number of different ministries, government departments or agencies working on topics as diverse as economic development, poverty reduction, health, environment, public services, gender, climate change and its impacts, agriculture, energy and fisheries. It would also require involvement of a broad range of other stakeholders such as civil society organizations, academic, research institutions, local and coastal communities, and the private sector.

34. While priorities may differ from one country to another and also depend on circumstances within individual States, in many instances, the tools, capacity, commitments and inter-institutional communication channels are lacking to prioritize the most important SDG interactions that bring about coherent results and to provide the information necessary to

[29] https://www.greenbiz.com/article/sdgs-everything-connected

evaluate which interventions and policies help or hinder holistic progress towards the goals.[30] More research and policies may be required to support designing pathways to SDG implementation, particularly with regard to taking full account of the importance of SDG 14 to the achievement of all other SDGs.

35. Measuring progress towards the holistic achievement of SDGs is also challenging. While individual indicators can help in assessing progress towards a specific target, they do not show how that progress, or lack thereof, impacts other targets and SDGs, nor do they demonstrate how short-term gains with respect to one goal may come at the expense of long-term sustainability for another. More research is required to articulate the causal pathways that demonstrate downstream impacts of actions taken to implement specific targets and SDGs, and to better understand the results of policy and management actions in complex socio-ecological systems.[31]

36. Collecting, analyzing, updating, monitoring and having access to, and engaging in timely sharing of, ocean data and statistics can also be a challenge for many countries and regions. Similarly, the lack of resources, particularly financial resources, is a key obstacle for implementing SDG 14, as is the reported lack of priority often given to SDG 14 by government leaders and donor organizations.[32] Raising the necessary funding requires a sense of urgency about ocean health, resilience and productivity and their importance to achieving the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

37. As recognized in the political declaration of the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, "Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action", policy coherence is critical for achieving SDG 14. Addressing SDG interlinkages through coherent policy responses brings about opportunities for new partnerships as well as for enhancing available data and approaches for implementation and monitoring. Synergies can be leveraged among others, through enhanced cooperation and multidisciplinary partnerships at all levels, increased data to support monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda, as well as capacity development and coordination mechanisms for the various SDGs at the national level.

38. Marine protected areas and other area-based management tools can, depending on their context, goals and implementation, help progress towards a number of SDGs, including SDGs 2, 8 and 13, by bringing economic, social, livelihoods, climate adaptation and cultural/recreational benefits. [33] Specific gaps and challenges exist for their effective implementation, including financing, management capacity and monitoring of their effective performance. Linkages between SDGs 13 and 14 can also be made through nature-based solutions and ecosystems restoration, particularly in mangrove, seagrass, algal (e.g. kelp) and wetland habitats to reduce disaster risk and foster climate adaptation, and further opportunities exist to implement such solutions. The importance of nature-based solutions as defined by the

[30] https://www.nature.com/articles/534320a

[31] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332220300087

[32] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332220300087

[33] https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2017/wp149_2017.pdf

recently adopted United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution,[34] could be promoted through public awareness campaigns and education, as well as through combating perverse incentives driving degradation and thus creating disaster risk.

39. As for opportunities, addressing interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs can open up new opportunities for governments to mainstream SDG 14 and ocean health, resilience and productivity into other policy processes, including sustainable social and economic development policies and plans. Opportunities for mainstreaming SDG 14 related actions exist in strategies for disaster risk reduction and climate change policies under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. Opportunities also exist for mainstreaming SDG 14 in National Action Plans on marine litter and plastic pollution, national plans related to food security, nutrition, human rights, and biodiversity (including in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans), as well as in national sustainable development strategies, supported by Integrated National Financing frameworks.

40. Environment-related policies and plans should consider the co-benefits across the SDGs in promoting nature-based solutions for the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment and its resources. Opportunities also exist for creating further coherence and synergies with a number of global processes, such as the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Conference), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 global biodiversity framework, UNEA, Stockholm 50+, as well as the climate change Conferences of the Parties (COPs), including by feeding outputs from the 2022 UN Ocean Conference .

41. Applying a human rights-based approach provides another key entry point for coherent action, including for decent employment in the ocean sector through implementation of the International Labor Organization's Work in Fishing Convention 2007 and Maritime Labour Convention 2006. In 2030, the ocean sector is anticipated to employ approximately 40 million full-time equivalent jobs in the business as-usual scenario. The fastest growth in jobs is expected to occur in offshore wind energy, marine aquaculture, fish processing and port activities[35]. This is another area where links between goals (such as SDGs 14, 5, 8 and 10) can be leveraged and strengthened. Making this linkage will address issues around achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all at sea, including for women who face discrimination in accessing decent work in ocean-based sectors. In addition, these discussions will also provide opportunities for addressing such matters as forced labour. It will enable these issues to be drawn to the attention of oceans-related entities and authorities, and will help in raising awareness, inter alia, fisheries agencies, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), coast guards, and foreign ministries.

42. Opportunities in leveraging interlinkages can be also found in cross-sectoral collaboration at the international level. For instance, effective ocean governance is based on strong

[34] UNEP/EA5/L9/REV.1

[35] https://www.oecd.org/environment/the-ocean-economy-in-2030-9789264251724-en.htm

partnerships that include UN organizations and other global and regional bodies that work together to achieve ocean health, resilience and productivity, and aim to move towards a sustainable ocean-based economy. Specific institutional SDG strategies and cross-sectoral working groups provide further policy coherence. For example, the IMO SDGs Strategy specifically calls for strengthening or developing new partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs (including strengthening partnerships with other UN bodies, industry, Non-Governmental Organizations and ports, with focus on SDGs 5, 9, 13 and 14). Another example is the annual regional learning platform of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on policy coherence for disaster risk reduction where building resilience to climate-related disasters has been identified as a key entry point to leverage synergies among a number of SDGs including SDG 14.

43. Multidisciplinary partnerships provide for the joint implementation of SDGs 14 and 17, and can ensure that all sectors and stakeholders are included in important decisions on ocean management and resource use. Partners include governments, civil society, local communities, the private sector, and academic/research organizations as well as international bodies. Multisectoral and multidisciplinary partnerships can be initiated through a review of SDG alignment with existing national and regional legal and policy frameworks, and associated planning of priority actions.

44. Opportunities also exist in developing integrated management systems that cover source to sea[36]strengthening and mainstreaming action plans for ecosystem-based marine and coastal planning and management to balance competing uses of marine resources and address degradation, pollution and resilience, and as part of marine spatial planning (MSP). MSP brings together multiple users of the ocean to make informed and coordinated decisions about how to use ocean spaces and resources sustainably. Improved and harmonized monitoring systems and data collection on land-based marine pollution, including marine litter sources, flows and impacts – will inform evidence-based decision making, create synergies, and foster progress on SDGs 14, 12 and 11.

45. There is also an opportunity to further develop partnerships around ocean science and technology for the simultaneous implementation of SDGs 14, 9 and 17. Ocean science and technology partnerships should endeavour to broadly share data, science and technology to increase understanding of ocean ecosystems and ocean-atmosphere interactions, and to mitigate likely physical and socioeconomic impacts, with particular attention to data-poor regions and towards reducing the digital divide. Development and use of citizen science can assist in filling in the data gaps in poorly researched regions or in monitoring coastal ecosystems. Citizen science has been shown to contribute to knowledge gaps through, for example, collection of ocean data by seafarers in remote areas[37], volunteer monitoring and

[36] Source to Sea is understanding the connection of the ecosystems and interconnectedness of lakes, rivers and the ocean.

[37] https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0186092

collection of marine plastics on beaches,[38] and monitoring of coral[39] and seagrass areas,[40] In addition, progress is being made to develop methodologies for SDG 14 indicators that use innovative and non-traditional data sources, such as traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, which contribute to the increased knowledge of coastal and marine ecosystems and species, and can support improved coastal and ocean management. Technology and technological innovation will continue to further interlinkages between SDG 14 and the other SDGs by developing new solutions for ocean observation and management. Digital technology applications and solutions are promising tools in supporting informed decision-making and the fights against IUU fishing and forced labour on fishing vessels.

46. Space applications are valuable for monitoring fisheries, ocean characteristics, coastlines and pollution. In this respect, the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018 – 2030) includes several proposed actions encouraging support for monitoring and sharing information on ocean characteristics. Such applications are particularly important for countries such as SIDS, whose exclusive economic zones often far exceed their total terrestrial space. Challenges in accessing this data include the availability of skilled spatial experts to undertake analysis, the resolution of satellite data, which may sometimes be too coarse for effectively observing some ocean characteristics, and the lack of availability of some data, such as radar data, in circumstances in which satellites are not monitoring ocean areas

47. Strengthening the science-policy interface is critical to achieving SDG 14. Actions taken towards ocean health, resilience and productivity rely on a scientific understanding of policy synergies and tradeoffs between SDG 14 and other SDGs, and with other related international policy instruments. Both policy action and measurement of progress across all SDGs can be facilitated through efforts to enhance the availability and quality of data, with further support and resources in this area required.

IV. Existing partnerships

48. Recognising the interlinkages between SDG14 and other SDGs, various partnerships foster synergistic efforts to achieve interacting goals and targets through an integrated approach. The partnerships below are not meant to be an exhaustive reflection but to highlight partnerships that support a variety of objectives that can help in achieving the implementation of SDG14.

49. Multi-stakeholder partnerships to leverage synergies are in place, such as North Sea Energy shared innovation programme in the Netherlands, which is creating a coalition of companies and research organizations to study and exploit synergies between offshore renewable and fossil-based energy activities. Furthermore, partnerships between industries and other entities can also develop and share best practices, as illustrated, for example, through the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Launched at the 2019 Climate Action Summit, the CDRI is a multi-country and multi-stakeholder coalition that aims to promote knowledge

[38] E.g. https://oceanlegacy.ca/cleanup-expeditions/ and many others
[39] https://www.reefcheck.org/
[40] E.g. https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/112412.html and others

exchange and provide technical support to countries on implementing disaster and climate resilient infrastructure. As the world becomes increasingly urbanized, it is critical to ensure that new investments, including for coastal cities, are climate and disaster-risk informed and do not generate new risks or trade-offs with the implementation of SDG 14.

50. Multi-sectoral partnerships that provide policy guidance and technical support to Member States through intergovernmental processes are equally important. The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) was created as a unique intergovernmental mechanism to address land-based pollution. Hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the GPA's purpose is to protect and preserve the marine environment from land-based pollution, such as sewage, physical alterations and the destruction of habitat, nutrients, sediment mobilization, persistent organic pollutants, oils, litter, heavy metals and radioactive substances. The Programme offers technical and policy guidance, through the following multi-sectoral partnerships concluded under its umbrella: Global Partnership on Nutrient Management; Global Partnership on Marine Litter; and Global Wastewater Initiative.

51. The Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management (S2S Platform) is a multi-stakeholder initiative with key partners from the UN system, intergovernmental organizations and research institutions that helps freshwater, coastal and marine experts to contribute to global knowledge generation on S2S interconnections, connect and engage in collaborative projects, promote best practices, and take collaborative action to improve the management of land, water, coastal and marine linkages.

52. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade) has provided opportunities for the formation of new partnerships. For example, ESCAP developed a Regional Decade Program to support the implementation of the Ocean Decade in the Asia-Pacific region. In collaboration with IOC/UNESCO, ESCAP is supporting the Environment Deputies and Climate Sustainability Working Group to facilitate the negotiations, focusing on Promoting Ocean-based Solutions to Climate Change Through Enhanced Cooperation in Science, Research, and Innovation.

53. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), UNEP/MAP(Mediterranean Action Plan) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will develop a joint project on "Enhanced regional knowledge and experience sharing for waste reduction in the Mediterranean". The objective of the project is to undertake a regional assessment of the effectiveness of high-tech and low-tech solutions that have been implemented in the selected countries of the Mediterranean region, with a view to their widespread utilization in waste reduction solutions and efforts. The expected result is enhanced technical capacities of Mediterranean decision-makers and stakeholders to achieve waste reduction and strengthened dialogue among the regions and countries that border the Mediterranean basin towards progressing into a more circular economy, while contributing to poverty eradication particularly among women and marginalized communities.

54. UNEP and UN-Habitat have partnered in various ocean-related activities and projects, including the Go Blue Project, funded by the European Union, which aims to advance the Blue

Economy agenda across Kenya's coastal region. Another example is an ongoing collaboration through the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and Waste Wise Cities where city waste assessment using Waste Wise Cities Tool, a guide to assess city's municipal solid waste management performance through monitoring SDG indicator 11.6.1 in more than 50 cities This provides key data for SDGs 14, 11 and 12 which informs UNEP's National Source Inventories of marine litter and plastic pollution for development of National Action Plans.

55. UNEP, through the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML), is also developing the GPML Digital Platform, a one-stop-shop online data hub aiming to bring together all stakeholders working on marine litter and plastic pollution. The platform also provides a unique opportunity to share knowledge and experience, where partners are able to work together to create and advance solutions to pressing global issues.

56. UN-Habitat has established the "Waste Wise Partnership (WaP)" with the ambition to bring partners together and deliver aligned products and projects to raise awareness, enhance coordination and cooperation among relevant organizations, build capacities and provide tools and integrated support to cities and countries in establishing sustainable municipal solid waste management, preventing plastic leakages and developing a circular economy, which will assist in achieving SDG 14 by reducing ocean pollution, including marine litter, from land-based sources. The International Seabed Authority (ISA) together with UN-DESA and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) have, since 2018, been implementing the Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth project, initially a Voluntary Commitment registered at the 2017 UN Ocean Conference. The project aims to ensure that the necessary governance structures and mechanisms required are in place in four Pacific SIDS (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and Tonga) with respect to sponsoring activities in the international seabed area , in order to assist those States in complying with their national and international obligations as seabed activities progress. In addition, in partnership with a range of stakeholders from academia, governments, civil society and industry, ISA is implementing the Women in Deep Sea Research project to support participation and leadership of women from LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and SIDS in deep sea science and technology.

57. To facilitate partnerships towards capacity development, IMO was the first UN agency to institutionalize its Technical Cooperation Committee, a body that continues to oversee IMO capacity-building programme and projects. The Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme, a framework of regional and global programmes, helps developing countries implement international maritime rules and standards.

58. ESCAP is also working with the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) through their Pacific Island Advisory Group and GEO Blue Planet initiatives, to bring technical space application solutions to governments for addressing ocean resources. Working groups have been established to focus on areas such as marine debris, coral reefs, fisheries, oil spills, sargassum, and several other topics.

59. The World Tourism Organization and UNEP, in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, launched in January 2020 the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative to address plastic

pollution and support tourism stakeholders to shift towards a circular economy for plastics. The initiative is structured around a common vision and commitments to eliminate problematic and unnecessary plastics; innovation to ensure that the plastics which remain in use are reusable, recyclable or compostable; and circulation to keep plastics in the value chain and out of the environment.

60. Cross-sectoral international cooperation helps to facilitate synergies between SDGs and their targets. For instance, the *Ship Recycling Transparency Initiative,* is an online platform facilitating synergies between SDGs 14, 12 and 13 in which shipowners share information on their approaches to ship recycling based on pre-defined disclosure criteria developed jointly by key industry stakeholders. Cargo owners and investors access this information from different companies to assist with decision making about the companies with which they chose to do business.

61. The Marine Biodiversity Observation Network (MBON) is a community of practice that strengthens understanding of marine biodiversity and coordinates monitoring of associated changes over time through scientific observations, thereby facilitating ecosystem conservation, sustainability, and good management practices. MBON is linking existing national and international research and monitoring efforts and works with the international community to promote the operational collection of biodiversity observations.

V. Possible areas for new partnerships

62. It is important that new partnerships are created and scaled up to address the interactions and create synergies in the implementation of all SDGs. Submissions highlighted following key areas for possible new partnerships.

63. Regarding the climate-biodiversity-ocean nexus, there is a need to build and accelerate momentum around the nexus in international processes, such as the UNFCCC, CBD COP and the 2022 UN Ocean Conference. The latter, in particular, provides a key opportunity to further articulate partnerships that address the interlinkages between the ocean and climate from a sustainable development perspective. Momentum is also required to build socially inclusive and participatory processes to scale up the application of nature-based solutions, such as the protection and restoration of blue carbon habitats and the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) and locally managed marine areas (LMMA) that build resilience and can be adapted to changing ocean conditions.

64. On marine plastic pollution, UNEA's 2020 resolution to end plastic pollution and develop a new legally binding instrument by 2024 will provide opportunities for multiple actors and stakeholders to come together in support of both the instrument's development and its implementation.[41]

65. Collecting, sharing and updating ocean data, as well as accessing it for use in decision making and monitoring can contribute towards SDGs 14, 9 and 10, and remains a high priority for most countries. Thus, partnerships, for example between the United Nations Statistical

[41] UNEP/EA.5/Res.14

Commission and regional Statistical Committees, and between statistical entities within the UN system and those in the forefront of policy making nationally and regionally, can together mobilize financial resources and data to better inform implementation at regional, national and local levels.

66. Regular national dialogue amongst government departments and stakeholders about how policies and actions will interact to achieve all - or several - of the SDGs will help create better policies. Some countries have established national working groups or similar mechanisms for cross-sectoral dialogue on the SDGs. These working groups include members from different government departments who are implementing policies on climate change, sustainable economic development, oceans, fisheries, gender, poverty reduction, and human health, among others, as well as relevant stakeholders including civil society and private sector. Together, working group members can assess synergies and tradeoffs in order to avoid unnecessary negative consequences such as avoidable impacts on marine ecosystems from economic development. In addition, efforts to increase ocean literacy can help policymakers better understand the interlinkages between ocean health, resilience, productivity, and opportunity.

67. Technology will continue to further interlinkages between SDG 14 and the other SDGs, including through the transfer of appropriate technologies, together with capacity-building and financing as envisaged in SDG targets17.3, 17.6, 17.7 and 17.9. For example, technologies for jointly reducing ocean waste and promoting sustainable fisheries management might include biodegradable and trackable fishing nets and gear that can be used to eradicate abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear. In addition, providing educational opportunities for youth and women in science, technology and innovation will help build the next generation of scientists and address gender equality thereby influencing SDG targets 5b and 8.6

68. Long-term scientific research collaborations featuring North-South and South-South capacity building can help enhance capacity of all stakeholders, including LLDCs to effectively participate in all fields of marine science and technology, in both national and international marine areas. Global, regional and sub-regional cooperation to promote comprehensive ocean governance is also of primary importance for achieving not only SDG 14, but other SDGs as well.

VI. Conclusions

69. To ensure the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, and the achievement of SDG14, It is imperative to identify in a systemic manner the sectors and areas in which synergies should be fully leveraged. Additionally, scientific knowledge and evidence-based policy options must be used to better analyze the tradeoffs between SDG 14 and targets in other goals. Financial and technological resources must be harnessed through multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral partnerships to better address the challenges in leveraging the interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs.

70. Leveraging synergies while avoiding tradeoffs is a considerable challenge, yet it is also an opportunity to advance the implementation of SDG 14 and other SDGs through the integrated

solutions called for by Member States. Partnerships have been established among UN Member States, UN system entities, civil society, the private sector, and other global and regional intergovernmental organizations to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration, policy coherence, and inter-agency coordination at various levels. However, many gaps remain to be addressed. Further systematic analysis, education and awareness-raising is needed on the interlinkages among SDGs, together with data to monitor and report progress and potential tradeoffs. Science, technology, and innovation, together with institutional and legal frameworks for good governance, will assist in addressing multiple goals through an integrated approach.

VII. Guiding questions

- How can national policies, strategies and legal frameworks effectively address the synergies between SDG 14 and other SDGs and potential tradeoffs?
- How can intergovernmental processes, international organizations and institutions enhance coherence and synergies in actions to promote ocean conservation and management across various SDGs, for example between SDGs 14 and 2, or SDGs 14, 8 and 9?
- What action, in terms of leveraging synergies with other SDGs, is required to ensure continued and scaled-up implementation of the SDG14 targets which were set to mature in 2020 ?
- How can science, technology and innovation be used and developed to identify critical areas for maximizing SDG synergies, and be best translated into, or support, policies ?
- How can science be used to monitor implementation of SDG 14 in a way that enhances transparency?
- How can we benefit from sustainable ocean-based economies considering the linkages with other SDGs?
- How can we build back better from the pandemic, setting a blue-green recovery path, in light of the interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs?