

## Briefing to Member States on the 2022 UN Ocean Conference

Tuesday, 17 May 2022, 10:00 AM-11:30 AM (EST)

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQ, NY

- *Ambassador Kimani, Under-Secretary-General LIU, Director Jares, excellencies, dear colleagues,*
- It is an honor to be with you here today, in which is my **first meeting** at the United Nations as Permanent Representative of Portugal.
- And it is only fitting that such first meeting is about the **upcoming UN Ocean Conference**, to which my government – along with the government of Kenya – has devoted a lot of effort and commitment over the past few years.
- Before moving to the more practical aspects of the Conference, let me take a step back to stress *why Portugal and Kenya have accepted this task* and *what the UN Ocean Conference is all about*: we took up this role because we are at a defining moment in terms of Ocean Action and in terms of addressing the crisis that is impacting the Ocean and marine biodiversity; and therefore the Conference is about **mobilizing support** to reverse course and fully implement Goal 14; it's about understanding what are the **challenges** and identifying **innovative solutions** that can help address those challenges; it's about **community-building**, and promoting **wide-ranging partnerships** that generate ambitious Ocean Action; it's about highlighting **science and innovation** as key enablers of transformative ocean action. These are the objectives we are focused on achieving; and for all of these, we count on your support and cooperation.
- And how do these objectives translate into the official programme and outcomes of the Conference?
- As you know, the Conference will have a **General Debate** running from Monday through Friday; and we not only encourage your leaders to participate, but most importantly to use those statements

to showcase **concrete solutions**, and to make **concrete commitments** that support Goal 14 and advance Ocean Action.

- In addition to that, as you know we will have the **Interactive Dialogues** focusing on eight themes, which are aimed at promoting **solutions** and **partnerships** related to those themes. Allow me to also encourage all of your representatives to engage in these discussions, and – in keeping with their interactive nature – to leave as much as possible your speeches at home and rather listen and react to what you hear during the debate, as well as contribute with your experiences, lessons learned, and success stories. I thank all those that made nominations for the Dialogues, and I am happy to say that – thanks to you – we will have a very strong lineup. I am also happy to share that Portugal and Kenya have already selected the co-chairs of the Dialogues, and this information will be circulated very soon by the PGA.
- Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representatives of Denmark and Grenada for their work **as co-facilitators of the Political Declaration of the Conference**; we are very happy to see that the discussions are moving in the right direction, and we urge all of you to exercise as much flexibility as possible in order for the negotiations to be concluded soon. We look forward to an ambitious and action-oriented Declaration that sets the tone for the years ahead.
- I also want to encourage all of you to submit **voluntary commitments** that support the implementation of Goal 14. I understand that USG LIU will share more about this in his remarks, and I want to stress that we will be working closely with the UN over the coming weeks to mobilize further commitments and more ambition in this regard.
- Let me now turn to the **Special Events**. On the margins of the Conference, we are organizing four special events that have their own goals and deliverables.

- The first is about “**Localizing Action for the Ocean**”. It will take place on 25 June, in the city of Matosinhos, and it will highlight the role of Local and Regional Governments in supporting ocean sustainability;
  - The second is the **Youth and Innovation Forum**, from 24 to 26 June in Cascais, just outside Lisbon. This event will focus on the role of young entrepreneurs, young scientists and young activists in addressing Ocean challenges and building solutions for the future;
  - The third event is **the Sustainable Blue Economy and Investment Forum**, which will take place in Estoril (also outside Lisbon) in the afternoon of 28 June. This event is about highlighting the contribution of the business sector to implementing Goal 14, as well as the importance of promoting investment solutions that accelerate the development of a sustainable blue economy;
  - And finally, in the afternoon of 27 June, we’ll organize a **Water Symposium**, which will focus on the full water cycle, thus underlining the intimate relationship between SDG 6 on Fresh Water and SDG 14 on Oceans.
- Specific information on each of these special events, including concept notes, programme and how to participate, can be found online on the website of the UN Ocean Conference.
  - Let me also say, with respect to **side events and exhibitions**, that we have received an overwhelming number of expressions of interest from member states, international organizations, and other stakeholders. I can assure you that we are doing our utmost to accommodate as many of you either inside the Blue Zone or outside the Blue Zone. We are working tirelessly on this, and decisions on application will be communicated in the coming weeks.
  - Before closing, let me touch upon three additional aspects:
    - First, an **Information Note on logistics** will be published very soon, with information regarding the venue, transportation in

Lisbon, visas, COVID protocols, etc. UN colleagues may wish to add to this.

- Second, we are – in coordination with the Municipality of Lisbon – putting together a **cultural programme** that will run in parallel with the Conference and that we hope will add color to the event.
  - Third, we are very encouraged by the early indication that the vast majority of Member States are planning to **participate at a high level**, many of which at the level of head of state or government. I want to take this opportunity to ask all of you to **further encourage your capitals** so that they send representation at the highest possible level.
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- Finally, let me say two important words of appreciation: one to our co-hosts **Kenya**, for the friendship and close partnership in this great endeavor; second, to the **United Nations** for all their relentless support, which has made this ocean journey much easier to accomplish.
  
  - Thank you very much for this opportunity, and please let me draw your attention to the video we will be showing later on. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you in Lisbon!