

Briefing to Member States on the 2022 UN Ocean Conference

Statement by Vladimir Jares, Director, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, on behalf of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel

17 May 2022, 10:00 am to 11:30 am
Trusteeship Council

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Ambassador Zacarias and Ambassador Kimani,
Under-Secretary-General Zhenmin,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here this morning at this briefing about ongoing preparations for the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference. I have the honour to deliver brief remarks on behalf of Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, who is the Special Adviser to the Presidents of the Conference on the ocean and legal matters.

It is also a great pleasure for the Office of Legal Affairs to work closely with Under-Secretary-General Zhenmin in his role as Secretary-General of the Conference, and with our colleagues at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, towards making the Conference a success.

Following the very detailed and substantive interventions

by the Co-Chairs and Under-Secretary-General Zhenmin, there is very little to add. Let me just mention in relation to the substantive side of the Conference that, through its Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the Office of Legal Affairs has co-led the preparation of the concept papers for two of the eight interactive dialogues, namely Dialogue 7 on “Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”, together with the International Seabed Authority, and Dialogue 8 on “Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”, together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Our Division has also made contributions to the preparation of several of the concept papers for other interactive dialogues.

The Office of Legal Affairs has also been following closely the informal consultations on the political declaration for the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, while preparations are well underway for providing substantial and procedural support to servicing the Conference itself in Lisbon.

I would finally like to mention that the Legal Counsel, in his capacity as UN-Oceans Focal Point, intends to convene a UN-Oceans side event including high-level involvement, with a view to showcasing how the United Nations system is working as one to restore ocean health and achieve Sustainable

Development Goal 14. All delegations are warmly welcome to attend this event.

In closing, let me note that the 2022 Ocean Conference provides a historic opportunity for States and other stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to global ocean action and promote science-based innovative solutions to sustainably manage our ocean into the future. It is also hoped that partnerships will leverage expertise and resources across sectors to achieve transformative action.

Of particular interest to the Legal Counsel will also be how the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources can be enhanced by implementing international law as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which, as recalled annually by the General Assembly, sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The Convention outlines rules whose effective implementation is vital to addressing threats to the health, resilience, productivity and governance of the ocean.

Thank you.