

## LOCALIZING ACTION FOR THE OCEAN: LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS SPECIAL EVENT

25 JUNE 2022

10:00 – 17:30 (WEST)

Matosinhos, Portugal

### Concept Note

### DRAFT

#### BACKGROUND

Convened by the United Nations General Assembly and co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal, the “[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](#)” will be held from 27 June to 1 July in Lisbon, Portugal, under the overarching theme: “*Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions*”.

The Conference will bring together Governments, the UN System entities and multiple stakeholders across different sectors to forge new solutions comes at a critical time as the world is seeking to address many of the deep-rooted problems of our societies laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic and which will require major structural transformations and common shared solutions that are anchored in the SDGs.

#### LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND SDG 14

By 2025, nearly 6 billion people will live within 200km of a coastline. Therefore, cities and regions have a great responsibility for ocean and coastal sustainability, and in building resilience to growing shocks and stresses. It is estimated that almost 80 per cent of the pollution load in the ocean comes from land-based activities, both in coastal areas and further inland. Municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes and run-off, as well as atmospheric deposition, affect the most productive areas of the marine environment, including estuaries and near-shore coastal waters.

Many coastal cities discharge sewage, industrial effluent and other wastewater directly into their surrounding seas. Inappropriate construction, under-regulated harbor and port activities, over extraction of natural resources and unsustainable agricultural practices can damage coastlines, leading to erosion, and the destruction of natural habitats. Additionally, stemming the tide of the plastics and microplastics leakage from cities (including non-coastal) is a key action that can bring ocean and urban/community actors together.

According to [the IPCC Report \(2022\)](#), climate change risks to cities, settlements and key infrastructure will rise rapidly in the mid- and long-term with further global warming, especially in places already exposed to high temperatures, along coastlines, or with high vulnerabilities. Ocean warming and ocean acidification have adversely affected food production from shellfish aquaculture and fisheries in some oceanic regions. Globally, population change in low-lying cities and settlements, including in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), will lead to approximately a billion people projected to be at risk from coastal-specific climate hazards in the mid-term. Unavoidable sea level rise and storm surges will bring cascading and compounding shocks and stresses resulting in losses of coastal habitats and ecosystem services,

groundwater salinization, flooding and damages to coastal infrastructure resulting into risks to livelihoods, settlements, health, well-being, food and water security, and cultural values in the near to long term.

Coastal cities and settlements also play an especially important role in advancing climate resilient development. In fact, also according to [the IPCC \(2022\)](#), growing public and political awareness of climate impacts and risks has resulted in many cities including adaptation in their climate policies and planning processes. Decision support tools and climate services are increasingly being used and pilot projects and local experiments are being implemented in different sectors.

Many citizens of coastal cities and regions depend directly on the ocean for their livelihoods, making it important to promote peer learning and sharing of good practices amongst cities and regions on how to promote a Blue Economy, encourage the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improve livelihoods and jobs, while protecting the ocean ecosystem health. Restoring these vulnerable ecosystems will also help in building back better from COVID-19, strengthening climate resilience and creating millions of jobs. For example, in coastal and island communities, where coral, seaweed, oysters, and others are being (re)established, the cascading benefits to cultural, social, and economic resilience are meshed with the “precovery mindset” and resilience building that can strengthen the entire community against storms, sea level rise and other impacts. Fisheries and tourism, biodiversity and water cleanliness, can be promoted at the same time that nature is used to protect the most vulnerable communities.

Innovative governance mechanisms will be key to achieving the sustainable use of the ocean in the context of SDG14. Only an integrated vision of the activities taking place at the ocean and their impacts on ecosystem services as well as of the impacts of land-based activities on the ocean would provide a better understanding of the threats and needs for sustainable management of the ocean.

## **LOCALIZING ACTION FOR THE OCEAN: LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS SPECIAL EVENT**

The [2022 UN Ocean Conference](#) offers a unique opportunity for cities and regions to mobilize and demonstrate leadership in taking action to protect our ocean and ensure that the ocean and its accompanying coasts are sustainably managed.

The Special Event on Localizing Ocean Action will be an opportunity to stress the presence of ‘urban-ocean linkages’, and how local and regional governments should be engaged in global efforts and decisions to protect the ocean and maritime resources, including food. The Special Event will also highlight the crucial role of multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen the science-policy interface, as well as to improve data systems and seek innovative solutions at all levels.

The Localizing Ocean Action Special Event will create an opportunity for local and regional governments and their networks, national governments, and other stakeholders to exchange experiences and good practices of SDG 14 implementation at the local level. It will be a space for local and regional governments and other stakeholders to announce voluntary [Ocean Action Commitments](#). Additionally, it will act as a space to facilitate a discussion on opportunities and initiatives that can support sustainable adaptation for coastal cities and regions, including financing innovation and scaling up Ocean protection.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To showcase successful experiences from local and regional governments and other stakeholders on the implementation and follow up of SDG 14.

- To establish synergies and act as a platform for announcements of new Voluntary Ocean Commitments by local and regional governments and other stakeholders in support of SDG 14 implementation.
- To facilitate networking and peer exchange between local and regional governments, their networks and partners on tools, mechanisms and solutions to support and finance SDG 14 implementation.
- To consolidate inputs from local and regional governments and partners to be shared during the 2022 UN Ocean Conference.

## FORMAT

The event will be a one-day event held fully in-person. The meeting will be open to local and regional governments representatives as well as representatives from UN Member States, UN entities, inter-governmental organizations and other stakeholders interested in supporting local action towards SDG 14 implementation.

The event will feature opening/closing segments and interactive sessions, including speakers from local and regional governments as well as other stakeholders from all regions, with due consideration of gender and geographical balance.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

All interested participants will need to register using a dedicated online form. The meeting will be held in English.

Interested participants will be responsible for all costs associated with their participation at the event.

For details about the event, please, check here: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/LRGspecialevent-2022UNOC>

## ORGANIZERS

This Special Event is hosted by the co-hosts of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference, the Governments of Portugal and Kenya, together with the City of Matosinhos, and organized in collaboration with UN DESA, UN Global Compact, the Climate Champions Team and networks of local and regional governments gathered in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability, Regions4, Ocean & Climate Platform, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Resilient Cities Network, the International Association Cities & Ports (AIVP) and OECD.

## OUTCOMES

A summary of discussions will be prepared. Key messages from the different sessions will be consolidated and shared by a representative of local and regional governments during a plenary session of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference.

For more information, please check here: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/LRGspecialevent-2022UNOC>