

**Plenary Statement by HE Mr Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti,
Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Caribbean
and Pacific States at the 2022 UN Ocean Conference in
Lisbon Portugal, Date and Time for Delivery TBA**

**President,
UN Secretary-General, HE Mr. António Guterres,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As Secretary-General of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), I am honoured to participate in this important Global Conference, as we witness the fast-declining health of the Ocean and the need to galvanise global support for its restoration. This is essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for implementing the Paris Agreement. Of great importance is that we, collectively, stop the behaviours that are jeopardising the earth's systems that we all depend on for life and sustenance.

To sustain the Ocean's benefits for our economies, livelihoods, and well-being, we need to mobilise urgent and sustained action **if** we are to save our World's Ocean from increasing exogenous pressures such as overfishing, pollution, biodiversity loss, habitat degradation, and climate change.

In the lead-up to this Ocean Conference, the OACPS, with the support of Partners, held the 7th Meeting of OACPS Ministers in Charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture, which was hosted by the Government of Ghana in Accra. The outcomes of the Meeting provide concrete and enabling policy actions and solutions to support the development of a thriving, resilient, and sustainable fisheries sector, including improving the small-scale fisheries sector, combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and scaling up the sustainable and inclusive fisheries and aquaculture value chains.

The OACPS recognizes the nexus between the twin global challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, which must be comprehensively addressed through holistic and integrated ocean-based actions to build the resilience of communities in the face of climate change. The OACPS has a mandate and a firm commitment to support its 79 members and 6 regions, and give momentum to ongoing multilateral efforts to find solutions to current ocean-related multilateral negotiations on biodiversity, fisheries subsidies, and the need to preserve maritime boundaries in the face of climate change-related sea-level rise.

Finally, the “OACPS’ *Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2030*”, is the transformative pathway adopted by Ministers to guide

the actions of the OACPS to promote the sustainable use and ensure productivity, and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems. The implementation of the Strategic Plan is a concrete commitment and pledge we make at this important Conference to support Members and Regions of the OACPS to effectively implement the commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDGs 13 and 14 for Climate Action and Life Below Water, respectively.

As we work to accomplish the ocean-related objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, genuine, durable partnerships and the sharing of successful lessons learned at all levels will be critical to building capacity at local, national and regional levels.

Mr. President, Excellencies - thank you very much.