



UNITED NATIONS
OCEAN
CONFERENCE

LISBON
27 JUNE -
1 JULY
2022

2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Plastics and marine pollution: innovations for SDG 14.1

29 June 2022, 1600-1715, Committee Room, Altice Arena, Lisbon

Organized by: Republic of Korea, UNDP, UNOSD

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Despite some progress, the world's oceans continue to face multidimensional crises driven by overfishing, pollution, habitat loss, invasive species, and climate change. Marine pollution, especially plastics pollution, in the ocean has negative wide ranging environmental, social, and economic impacts. Acknowledging the need for urgent global action, United Nations (UN) Member States recently agreed to create a legally binding global agreement to address plastic pollution at the 5th UN Environment Assembly. This ambitious initiative will require broad support and innovation. Much needs to be done to achieve the 2030 Ocean Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The challenge remains that among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), SDG 14 is estimated to receive the lowest level of investment, only averaging \$1.3 billion per year. To identify and scale up practical and innovative solutions and actions to address marine plastic pollution being implemented by various stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of SDG 14, the [UN Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#), the [UN Office for Sustainable Development \(UNOSD\)](#), and the [Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries \(MOF\) of the Republic of Korea \(ROK\)](#) co-organized this UNOC side event. The event highlighted actions, progress, and commitments made by Sweden, Qatar, the ROK and the UNDP Ocean Innovation Challenge (UNDP OIC) in catalysing technologies, policies, and other innovative solutions to reduce marine pollution. Critical call for actions, inspiring messages, and examples of science-based solutions were delivered by the following distinguished speakers: Sweden State Secretary to Minister for Climate Change and the Environment **Anders Grönvall**; Vice Minister **Sang-Keun Song** of the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries; Qatar Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Protection and Natural Reserves **Ibrahim Abdul Latif Al Muslimani**; UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of Bureau for Policy and Programme Support **Haoliang Xu**; UNDP Head of Water and Ocean Governance Programme **Andrew Hudson**; UNOSD Head of Office **Chun Kyoo Park**; as well as technical and industry experts: Osan University Professor **Youngran Lee**; Deputy Director of the ROK's Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries **Yukyung Jang**; World Trade Organization Senior Advisor to Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala **Yuvan Beejadhur**; Director of Global Plastic Action Partnership and Member of the Executive Committee of the World Economic Forum

Kristin Hughes; Director General of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
Sefanaia Nawadra; Director of the Marine and Polar Program of the International Union for Conservation of Nature
Minna Epps; UNDP Ocean Advisor and Ocean Innovation Challenge Manager
Mary Matthews; and the [first cohort of UNDP ocean innovators](https://www.oceaninnovationchallenge.org/2022OceanConference) representing various organizations from around the globe. The video recording of the side event is accessible at <https://www.oceaninnovationchallenge.org/2022OceanConference>.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- **Our ocean is in a critical state and numerous, urgent, and collective actions are needed.** The Stockholm+50 Conference clearly highlighted the triple planetary crises – climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and with the ocean at the center of all these. The coasts and seas are serving as a waste sink for human activities. Marine pollution critically affects the health of the ocean, both plastics and nutrients reaching the sea. One of the most urgent threats to the marine environment is the ubiquitous plastic pollution that accounts 85% of marine debris, 80% of which comes from land. There is also a critical linkage between plastics and climate change – 4.5% of the carbon emissions are linked with plastics production and disposal, making the issue part of the climate change challenge. Necropsy of marine life, which is an important indicator of the ocean health, also shows evidence of deaths, threats, and harmful effects of plastic wastes on marine life, emphasizing the need for immediate actions.
- The SDG14 Targets are among the most ambitious global commitments, and yet remain seriously delayed and underfunded. **Business as usual will not result in a healthy ocean but innovative solutions will.** It is critical to keep the momentum going in developing science-based tools and solutions, and incubating oceans innovations that are replicable and scalable with indicative transformational impacts on the ocean health and socio-economic benefits. This includes the 19 innovations rigorously selected and currently incubated by the UNDP Ocean Innovation Challenge in its 1st and 2nd call for proposals, and future ongoing calls
- **Global governance has a key role in setting and achieving ambitious targets and putting solutions and action plans into effect at national and regional levels to address plastic pollution as part of the circular economy** - as emphasized by high-level officials from the environment ministries of Sweden, Qatar, and Republic of Korea. Furthermore, due to the transboundary nature and global scope of the plastic pollution crises, **it is crucial to strengthen partnerships and work in synergies with the wider international community.**
- **Blue Economy cannot thrive without addressing the plastics agenda robustly and thoroughly.** In promoting circular economy, we must look not only into the accessible technology and investments but also on the policy, regulations, trade rules around the world, including compliance with global standards such as those set by the World Trade Organization. It is crucial to examine the internalities that make it difficult to tackle these topics and shed light on new possibilities and opportunities. **Stronger involvement from the**

private sector in finding innovative solutions on plastic and nutrient pollution, as human consumption increases, is also seen as inevitable.

- Pacific island nations as well as other small island developing states (SIDS) produce very minimal plastics, and much of the plastic packaging and waste originate from other countries. As much as SIDS nations are remaining as strong, resilient, and vocal on the realities of plastics and marine pollution challenge and the Blue Economy agenda, a **stronger global cooperation against threats to the ocean health is essential in enhancing SIDS and least developed countries' (LDCs) resilience and response** to appropriately address the excessive waste issue and achieve significant outcomes.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Recognizing the interdependency and interlinkages of the SDGs, **UNDP and UNOSD, together with partners, should continue to coordinate and jointly support UN member states, SIDS and LDCs** to tackle pollution from marine plastic and nutrient loads while maximizing synergies by further developing and sharing scientific tools for evidence-based policies and solutions, foster and incubating innovations, and promoting replication and scaling up of success stories and transformational solutions.
- Saving Our Ocean is about Saving Ourselves. **We need to do things better, urgently, and together for the ocean.** All sectors of the society – public and private sectors, academia, civil society – all individuals – need to work together to create systemic change towards minimizing and eventually eliminating plastics and other forms of marine pollution. We need to collaborate with the international community in advancing the UNEA-5.2 resolution on the establishment of a legally binding global agreement to put an end to plastic pollution and support other global calls for action to revive ocean health.
- Some developing nations are already leading the way on waste prevention and improved collection systems, effective management and recycling of marine debris, enhancement of infrastructure and public engagement, and new solutions being applied on-the-ground with the prospects of wide-ranging benefits. **We need to share success stories and creative ideas and accelerate innovative solutions to improve the current direction** in closing the loop on the plastics dilemma and nutrient discharges, and recovering lost resources often found in wastes that end up polluting the ocean.
- Through the UNDP Ocean Promise launched in Lisbon and building on its two years of experience with the Ocean Innovation Challenge, **UNDP will continue its commitment to deliver 100 unique Ocean Innovations by 2030.** Moving forward in collaboration with the Global Fund for Coral Reefs—of which UNDP is a founder—UNDP will replicate and scale up innovations that directly benefit the ocean, its rich biodiversity, and the coastal communities..
- **New resources and capital must be mobilized to keep the Lisbon UN Ocean Conference momentum going** - make new targets, joint actions, and alliances an even bigger success.

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

UNOSD commits to expand and reinforce its roles and mandate to support the Member States in accelerating their progress to achieve SDG 14. This includes continuous efforts on strengthening its capacity development programmes, policy advisory services, knowledge sharing, and

partnership development related SDG 14 and other interdependent SDGs by fostering evidence-based approaches and maximizing synergies among the stakeholders. Some Voluntary commitments from UNDP's Ocean Portfolio, valued at around \$92 million investments for the sustainable management of coasts and seas, have been contributed to date since 2017. These represent projects and programmes on various community-based actions through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme, global and regional GEF International Waters projects in Africa and LAC, and the first cohort of eight ocean innovators on SDG 14.1 supported by Sida and Norad. As a follow-up to the first successful joint effort in organising this side event, UNDP and UNOSD will synergize in promoting scientific tools, evidence-based policies, and supporting ocean innovators through dynamic knowledge sharing and capacity enhancement for the next 12 months.