

LOCALIZING ACTION FOR THE OCEAN:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS SPECIAL EVENT

25 JUNE 2022

Matosinhos, Portugal

PLENARY STATEMENT, 2022 UN OCEAN CONFERENCE

Your excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to share with you the outcomes of the UN 2022 Ocean Conference Special Event on “Localizing Action for the Ocean”, which was held on 25 June in Matosinhos.

This Special Event was co-hosted by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya, together with the City of Matosinhos. It was organized in collaboration with UN DESA, UN Global Compact, the Climate Champions Team and many networks of local and regional governments, including the Global Task Force 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.

The event brought together representatives of local and regional governments from around the world, as well as national governments, international organizations, academia, civil society networks and several other stakeholders to share experiences, good practices and challenges in making SDG 14 a reality at the local level.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me, please, to briefly share some of the key messages from the Event:

[Session 1]

We reflected on how, by 2025, nearly 6 billion people will live within 200 km of a coastline, and how important it is for coastal cities and regions to invest in innovative sustainable solutions for long-term defenses against the impacts of climate change, including flooding, coastal erosion and rising sea-levels.

We heard good practices by cities that are stepping up to the unprecedented complexities of current challenges, building on long term knowledge and making massive investments in technical solutions to safeguard their people, their livelihoods, and to build a more resilient future.

[Session 2]

A critical topic that was discussed was how to channel more funding, blended finance and private sector resources to coastal cities to combat climate change and to build resilience. Discussions also focused on how to design new funding mechanisms and processes in this regard.

[Session 3]

The critical role of local and regional governments and territories in the governance of the Ocean, including beyond coastal areas, was stressed.

Participants called for strengthened cooperation, and for inclusive and innovative multi-stakeholder governance approaches that bring together scientists, NGOs, economic and the administrative sectors.

The capacities of local and regional governments need to be strengthened. We need to have in place decision-making processes that are based on science and innovative solutions that reconcile the protection of maritime ecosystems and the preservation of ecosystem services with maritime activities for the benefit of all.

[Session 4]

Concrete examples of efforts to accelerate the energy transition and the protection of marine biodiversity were also shared.

The crucial role of ports and port cities catalysts of greener and decarbonized logistics was stressed, and there was a call for assessing port projects in metrics that go beyond GDP. Adopting a localized approach for the Sustainable Blue Economy is an opportunity for ports to reduce polluting emissions and environmental externalities of the maritime sector. Once again, multi-level governance will be key to break the silos between policies that protect the ocean and the land.

[Closing]

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our discussions debunked a few myths about local action for the oceans, including:

- 1) the myth that there are silos at the local level;
- 2) the myth that there are no integrated solutions being implemented,
- 3) the myth that local and regional governments are not interested in being active players on SDG 14 implementation, and
- 4) the myth that there are no partners willing to invest in local action.

Next, we need to move from debunking myths to strengthening action.

Local and regional governments and partners are committed. We have projects. We have solutions. We have results. What we urgently need is more funding to be channeled for cities and regions so that we can accelerate Ocean protection.

Let's keep the dialogue going!

Thank you