

OECD STATEMENT

for the Interactive Dialogue 8: “Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

By Claire Jolly, Head of Unit, OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation

Your Excellencies,

Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations,

Distinguished participants,

It is an honour to contribute to this Interactive Dialogue, following such eminent speakers. Based on the excellent previous presentations and adding some OECD perspectives, I will focus here on three main points.

1. The first one is how the linkages between SDG14 and the other SDGs keep growing, calling even more our attention to ocean sustainability.

The previous panellists already mentioned some of these connections and even overlaps between the SDGs. Let me stress here again one example, adding some further elements: it concerns seafood production and its links to food security and climate change. We heard from previous speakers that fish and other seafood products can play a significant role in improving global nutrition, and achieving the goal of zero hunger enshrined in SDG2. There are also growing linkages with SDG13 (climate change).

It is estimated that almost 170 million people worldwide could avoid undernutrition by 2030, by increasing sustainable seafood production through effective fisheries management, financial investments, and aquaculture innovation. But let me remind you that an additional 100 million people were actually drawn into undernutrition in the past couple of years, because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This situation comes at a time, when climate change and biodiversity loss are accelerating. Today, almost 3 000 different aquatic species are caught and around 650 species are farmed. With the acceleration of climate change and declining fish stocks, this is changing rapidly. According to the IPCC, almost 90% of global heating has been absorbed by the ocean so far, leading to changes in the productivity and geographic distribution of fish stocks. By 2050 or even earlier, the maximum catch potential has been projected to decrease by up to 12% on average, depending on the level of greenhouse gases emitted globally.

This means that global warming may result in existing species disappearing totally and new species arriving in as many as 70 countries' exclusive economic zones. This is really raising the prospect of conflicts in many parts of the world, and therefore of an ever-greater need for international co-operation on fisheries management.

So the main way forward is first and foremost sustainable fisheries management. The historic deal on fishing subsidies at the World Trade Organisation, just a few weeks ago, is a very positive sign, although still with its own challenges, as many harmful subsidies, such as fuel costs are not taken account in the agreement.

But as shown by OECD analysis, when fisheries are managed effectively, they can not only maintain production, but sustainably produce more fish, thanks to improved fish stocks. It is clear that achieving SDG14 targets could have many very positive impacts on other SDGs.

2. However my second point is a sobering diagnostic that I think we all share, in terms of the missed targets for SDG14s so far – and the need for more actions.

We have a difficult path ahead. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is very broad and ambitious, with 17 SDGs and 169 targets to be achieved globally by 2030. Some are measured well nationally and internationally, and achievable.

But, still today there are more than 40 SDG targets not tracked, because we don't have ways to measure them, and we still don't have data for more than 60 indicators. Amongst the worse off, we have the Planet's related SDGs: climate change (SDG13) and ocean (SDG14). The COP26 in Glasgow recognized the ocean-climate nexus and highlighted the importance of ensuring the integrity of ocean and coastal ecosystems in the context of climate change. Such discussions are continuing towards COP27, and this week several announcements were made here in this conference, in terms of boosting cooperation in ocean observing in particular, so we can get more of the critical data we need to monitor and manage better the ocean.

3. So my final point ends on a more positive note, with the increasing attention given to the ocean that this conference will hopefully contribute to.

We have been working on the ocean economy for some years now at the OECD, and we are seeing many changes, in terms of the growing high-level political interest in the ocean, but also in the number and growth of ocean economic activities. Back in 2016, the OECD projected that the ocean economy could double in size to 2030, reaching 3 trillion US dollars and employing 40 million people. All this growth comes with a price, with many challenges for ocean health, reinforced by an acceleration in climate change.

But the good news is that many policy instruments are already available to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean by responsible governments. They include regulatory and economic instruments that the OECD tracks. Some of these instruments can generate and mobilise directly new finance for the ocean. As an example, taxes relevant to ocean sustainability generated at least 4 billion USD in 2018, with taxes on ocean-related pollution, transport and energy generating the most revenue. Effective policy mixes, supported by science, can already be put in place now to address the different pressures on the ocean, and to foster better behaviours.

So to conclude this brief intervention as part of this important Interactive Dialogue, the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs represent a major framework for economic development that can help countries work toward peace and prosperity. But it calls for national responsibilities, with the actual mobilization and effective use of domestic resources, and active partnerships with the private sector.



As we launch at the OECD a new foresight exercise, exploring the ocean economy to 2045, we believe there is much progress to be made, but also some positive signs.

This week, some concrete solutions were presented by different UN agencies, by the OECD, other organisations and NGOs -- whether they are about changing radically the plastics value chains, encouraging mangrove protection and restoration, measuring better the ocean industries and their impacts on the environment, putting in place restricted marine protected areas with effective monitoring and enforcement, and implementing an operational and fully integrated ocean observing system to enhance our collective prediction capabilities --, all of these are common sense and can make a real difference, and while bringing actual socio-economic benefits.

We will all eventually gain in addressing and reaching the SDGs targets. The OECD will continue supporting countries with evidence and policy advice to reach these objectives.

Thank you for your attention, I look forward to the discussions.