



PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT

2nd United Nations Ocean Conference

Interactive Dialogue 7: Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Tejo Hall, Altice Arena, 30 June 2022

Thank you, Co-chairs.

2022 is the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. UNCLOS establishes the primacy of rule of law in governing all uses of the oceans and their resources, in one instrument, which also provides a framework for the further development of specific areas of the law of the sea.

There is no recourse to general international law on matters comprehensively covered by the UNCLOS. Compliance with UNCLOS, which represents a delicate balance of the rights and obligations of all State Parties, in its entirety, is key to ensuring global and regional peace and the fair and sustainable use of the oceans.

When the 2016 Arbitral Award ruled that certain actions within our exclusive economic zone violated our sovereign rights and were thus unlawful; that large-scale reclamation and construction of artificial islands caused severe environmental harm in violation of international conventions; and that the large-scale harvesting of endangered marine species damaged the marine ecosystem, it reminded States of its obligation under UNCLOS to protect and preserve the marine environment.

The Philippines reaffirms that UNCLOS is the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. This is true for us whether the discussion is on entitlement and management of maritime jurisdiction, sovereign rights and sovereignty, marine environmental protection, or the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. UNCLOS provides guidance, with sufficient flexibility for States to also come into agreement, along common principles.

Thank you.