

Interactive Dialogue 7 – Enhancing the Conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

UK Statement

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea – UNCLOS - is a major achievement of diplomacy and international law making.

- It has made a significant contribution to global peace, prosperity and security by providing consistency and certainty concerning the governance of the ocean. It provides the legal framework for all activities in the ocean and seas.
- The UK recognises, however, that challenges to ocean governance remain. Despite duties on States to protect marine environment and to sustainably manage its resources, the health of the ocean has significantly degraded due to human action.

The UK also recognises the particular concerns of the member countries of the Pacific Island Forum and AOSIS with respect to the stability of their maritime boundaries in the face of sea level rise.

The UK's vision is that by 2030 the ocean will be effectively governed, clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse, linking resilient and prosperous communities around the world, and supporting sustainable economic growth.

The UK is committed to work with partners to achieve this vision. We will work together to develop the science we need to meet the challenges set out under the UN Decade of Ocean Science, including through our membership of the newly launched Global Ocean Decade Programme for Blue Carbon

We urge all States to become parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the Port State Measures Agreement, and to cooperate, including through RFMOs, to ensure well-managed and well-monitored fisheries which are an essential component of a healthy ocean, resilient coastal communities, and food security. Political momentum is needed to tackle the scourge of IUU fishing and an IUU Fishing Action Alliance has been launched this week, we welcome others to support this important initiative.

As the leader of the Global Ocean Alliance, and Ocean co-chair of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People alongside Costa Rica and France and a member of the High Ambition Coalition for BBNJ, the UK looks forward to the conclusion of an ambitious BBNJ Agreement in this 40th anniversary year of UNCLOS, and to agreeing the 30x30 target at the CBD CoP.

As part of the UK's £500 million Blue Planet Fund we are launching a £154m COAST programme to help developing countries and vulnerable coastal communities adapt to climate change and build more prosperous blue economies.

And the UK will invest a further £36 million through the Sustainable Blue Economies programme to support Small Island Developing States' to develop a climate resilient blue economy, whilst protecting nature and marine biodiversity.

A further £100m of that Blue Planet Fund will be dedicated to establishing and improving marine protected areas around the world.

We look forward to working with you all to continue to uphold and improve the implementation of UNCLOS.