

Draft Outline

Secretary-General's background note for the preparatory meeting of the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (UNHABITAT)

I. Introduction

- Background of the Conference.
- Mandate for the background note as per General Assembly resolutions 78/128 and 77/242.
- Structure of the background note, including aim of the note, taking into consideration the overarching theme of the Conference “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean”.

II. Status and Trends

1. Status and trends including key milestones.

Contributions are sought on the status of progress and trends in the implementation of SDG 14, since the United Nations Ocean Conference held in Lisbon in 2022. Entities are requested also to provide updates on the key milestones achieved of relevance to SDG14 in their respective areas since 2022.

III. Leveraging interlinkages between SDG 14 and other SDGs towards ocean action: Challenges and opportunities:

Contributions are sought on the interlinkages between the 10 targets of SDG 14 and other SDGs in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address:

There is a strong linkage between SDG 14 and 11. One specific example is target 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution. Cities have a significant contribution to marine pollution, particularly through plastic waste and nutrient runoff. Implementing sustainable waste management practices and promoting plastic reduction initiatives in urban areas can help prevent and reduce marine pollution, thereby contributing to the achievement of Target 14.1. SDG target 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management is directly related to that.

SDG 11 Target 5 is also of high relevance: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations. This highlights the vulnerability of coastal cities to sea level rise and flooding, which are water-related disasters. Investing in climate-resilient urban planning strategies, enhancing coastal defenses, and supporting community-based adaptation initiatives can help reduce the impacts of water-related disasters on cities and communities.

Challenges:

Urban areas are now home to the majority of the world's population. Urbanisation processes generate vulnerability and exposure which combine with climate change hazards to drive urban risk and impacts. "Evidence from urban and rural settlements is unequivocal; climate impacts are felt disproportionately in urban communities, with the most economically and socially marginalised being most affected" (IPCC Chapter 6th Assessment Report Chapter 6, high confidence). Cities also contribute significantly to issues affecting our oceans, including climate change, but they also generate vast amounts of plastic waste, a significant portion of which ends up in rivers and eventually flows into the oceans.

Since most of the world's megacities are located in coastal areas, and coastal areas generally demonstrate higher population densities, the linkages between sustainable cities, adequate access to clean water resources, and sustainable oceans are clear. Expansive land and resource use in coastal and other waterbody areas, which also includes infrastructure development, has many negative impacts on natural ecosystems. Most of marine litter is from land-based sources. Expansive land and resource use in coastal and other waterbody areas, which also includes infrastructure development, has many negative impacts on natural ecosystems, which need to be addressed through integrated land-sea planning and management, as well as sustainable urban planning and management, which favors sustainable waste and wastewater practices.

Opportunities:

Integrated planning and management for coastal land use and marine areas, and waste and water management can help to ensure the sustainable development of coastal cities and communities, preservation of ecosystems, biodiversity, cultural and natural heritage, reduction of marine pollution and enhancement of urban resilience. It can also enhance green and blue economy opportunities for the coastal populations.

Spatial planning is at the forefront of responding to climate vulnerabilities and therefore must also guide the investments in resilient infrastructure, adaptation and mitigation to climate induced risks, while also steering sustainable urbanization processes and the protection of cultural and natural heritage. Public participation is key for the success of this strategy and therefore special attention must be given to the communities that depend on the waterbodies (freshwater and saltwater).

Providing more research linking oceans, waterbodies and urban development, especially the knowledge and information that can feed into policy decisions and processes on the local, regional and national levels, is an opportunity.

IV. Mobilizing all actors to accelerating ocean action:

Contributions are sought on ways to promote collaboration, cooperation and partnerships to accelerate implementation of SDG 14. The following issues will be highlighted:

1. Investing in SDG 14

This section will focus on ways and means to support the implementation of SDG14. The following cross-cutting issues relevant to support the implementation of SDG 14 will be explored among others:

- Mobilizing finance for SDG 14.
- Marine science and technology (including technology development and transfer) and the use of traditional knowledge for ocean health.
- Capacity-building.

2. Strengthening Partnerships (including Voluntary Commitments)

This section will focus on key initiatives undertaken in partnership at the global, regional and national levels with a diverse set of stakeholders. Contributions may also highlight voluntary commitments made and their impact as relevant.

3. Mobilizing All actors

This section will consider the relevant stakeholders that need to be mobilized to accelerate ocean action, with a focus on the role of women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities to leave no one behind.

V. Possible themes for the Ocean Action Panels

Recommendations will be made for the themes of the ten Ocean Action panels in this section, based on the input received.

Addressing the intertwined challenges of ocean pollution and coastal vulnerability requires collaborative action at local, national, and international levels. We recommend including an action panel on Cities and Regional Governments that have increasingly been recognized as relevant actors in this space, especially regarding localization of SDGs. They are also key to creating multistakeholder alliances and to support global action on the ground.

VI. Way Ahead/Next Steps