

**High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, Annual Leaders Meeting,
New York, 25th September 2024 UNGA High-Level Week**

Remarks by Ambassador Peter Thomson on behalf of UN Secretary-General

Excellencies,

All courtesies observed and thank you for this opportunity to address you all this morning on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General.

I'd like to congratulate you on the achievements set out in the second Ocean Panel progress report. It is well noted that the fourteen founding members of the Ocean Panel committed to have Sustainable Ocean Plans in place by the end of next year, and that so far nine Panel members have either implemented or are updating their Plans accordingly. That is very significant progress and I commend all those involved.

There is only one ocean, everything is connected. Thus, your launching today of the 100% Alliance for Sustainable Ocean Management will no doubt have global impact through its drive to encourage every coastal and ocean State to join in the commitment to 100% sustainable ocean management by 2030. I thank France and the World Resources Institute for their leadership of this worthy initiative.

Excellencies,

The 3rd UN Ocean Conference, to be held in Nice next June is fast approaching. The conference co-hosts, Costa Rica and France are working closely with relevant representatives of the UN family to ensure this global gathering in support of Sustainable Development Goal 14 achieves the outcomes demanded of it by UN Member States. The topics of the conference's ten Ocean Action Panels have now been announced and I encourage members of the Ocean Panel to volunteer to co-chair them.

As recognised leaders working for the ocean's well-being, I very much hope that when your country representatives arrive in Nice next year, they will be able to set exemplary examples to others by having met outstanding multilateral ocean measures. Included in these measures are early ratification of the BBNJ Agreement, along with concerted international action at the World Trade Organisation to end harmful fisheries subsidies. Meanwhile, we should

all expect that ongoing negotiations for an internationally-binding Plastics Treaty result in robust controls on plastic production and remedial action on plastic pollution, particularly in the marine environment.

I also bring to your attention next month's COP16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, being held in Cali, Colombia. Two years ago in Montreal, the remarkable multilateral consensus of the Global Biodiversity Framework was achieved, under which we undertook to protect 30% of the planet by 2030. COP16 presents us with the best cross-sectoral opportunity to reach common understanding on how to achieve that ambitious target. For the existential benefit of people and planet, I urge you to encourage your representatives at COP16 to be positive elements in the creation of that understanding.

Excellencies,

Through the Ocean Panel's membership of serving Heads of State and Government, through your accumulated knowledge base of cutting-edge ocean reports, and through your sustained leadership in the cause of ocean action, you hold a unique position in the global community. Your leadership of collective ocean action serves a strife-torn world at a time of dire need. Thus, I applaud you once more for the worthiness of your shared commitments, and call on you to foster greater international dedication to the well-being of the ocean, that it may continue to support life on this planet for generations to come.