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**2025 United Nations Conference to
Support the Implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14:
Conserve and sustainably use the
oceans, seas and marine resources
for sustainable development**

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Ocean Action Panels

ADVANCE UNEDITED

**Ocean Action Panel 10: 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**

Concept paper prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

The present concept paper was prepared pursuant to paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution [78/128](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development to prepare concept papers on each of the themes of the Ocean Action Panels, taking into account the relevant ocean-related processes of the Assembly and other possible contributions. The present paper relates to Ocean Action Panel 10, entitled “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”. In the paper, the status, trends, challenges and opportunities for the achievement of relevant targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14 are set out, under the overarching theme of the Conference: “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean”.

I. Introduction

1. Recognizing that “the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole”, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the Convention”) establishes “a legal order for the seas and oceans which [...aims to] promote the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment”.¹ The effective implementation of international law, as reflected in the Convention, is essential to achieving these objectives and supporting action to attain Sustainable Development Goal 14.

2. With 16 November 2024 marking the thirtieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, recent developments in the law of the sea and ocean affairs have shown that the Convention, as a “living instrument”,² could have been complemented by other instruments and that the legal regime for the ocean can adapt to meet new challenges, including those related to Goal 14 and other ocean-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The present concept paper provides an overview of the relevant provisions of the Convention and related instruments, outlining how they underpin the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. The progress made in relevant fields, as well as gaps and challenges in the implementation of the legal framework are highlighted, along with opportunities and pragmatic solutions for improving and enhancing implementation, including through mobilizing all relevant stakeholders, building strong partnerships, fostering cooperation and scaling up ocean action at all levels.

II. Status and trends

3. Implementing international law, as reflected in the Convention, is the very object of target 14.c but also transcends and is of vital importance for achieving all other targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14. Since the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, significant developments have taken place in the legal field, confirming, as recalled annually by the General Assembly in its resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea, that the Convention sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and is of strategic importance as the basis for local, national, regional and global action and cooperation. With 170 parties,³ the Convention enjoys close to universal acceptance, and many of its provisions reflect customary international law. The most salient recent developments are highlighted below, with a focus on four thematic areas, which correspond to the ten targets of Goal 14 and the relevant provisions of the Convention: protection and preservation of the marine environment and biodiversity, sustainable fisheries, sustainable management of non-living resources, and advancement of ocean knowledge and understanding through marine scientific research and the development and transfer of marine technology.

4. **In terms of the protection and preservation of the marine environment and conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity**, the obligations of States to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the marine environment from any source and to protect and preserve rare or fragile ecosystems and the habitats of depleted, threatened or endangered species and other forms of marine life are set out in Part XII

¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, preamble.

² International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, *Request for an advisory opinion submitted by the Commission of Small Island Developing States on climate change and international law* (Advisory Opinion of 21 May 2024, para 130).

³ Rwanda and San Marino are the last two States which acceded to the Convention after the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference.

of the Convention. Given the threats to ocean health from anthropogenic activities, including the effects of climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation,⁴ effective implementation of those obligations is crucial to achieving target 14.c of Sustainable Development Goal 14, including targets 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3.

5. Until recently, the Convention was supplemented by two implementing agreements: the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (Part XI Agreement), which applies to the Area,⁵ and the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement).

6. After nearly two decades of negotiations, the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) was adopted by consensus, on 19 June 2023. The BBNJ Agreement is the third implementing agreement to the Convention and, as such, it must be interpreted and applied in the context of and in a manner consistent with the Convention.⁶ It addresses a package of four main issues under the general objective of ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, for the present and in the long term, through the effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the Convention and further international cooperation and coordination. As the first comprehensive, cross-sectoral treaty in decades after the Convention, the BBNJ Agreement has the potential to lead to more integrated approaches to the management of ocean activities, as set out in the preamble of the Convention. The General Assembly has emphasized the importance of its early entry into force and effective implementation.⁷ It is expected that the Agreement can make vital contributions to collective efforts to reverse destructive trends facing the ocean and its resources and thereby achieve Goal 14 and its targets, as well as other ocean-related goals and targets, including those of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).⁸

7. Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its fifteenth meeting, in December 2022, the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework comprises 23 action-oriented global targets for urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to 2030, with targets 2 and 3 being particularly relevant to the objectives of Part XII of the Convention, as they aim to ensure, that, by 2030, respectively, at least 30 per cent of degraded marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration and at least 30 per cent of marine and coastal areas are effectively conserved and managed.

8. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its sixteenth meeting, made important strides towards achieving the targets laid out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including by adopting the modalities for operationalizing the multilateral mechanism for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of digital sequence information on genetic

⁴ United Nations, *The Second World Ocean Assessment: World Ocean Assessment II*, 2021, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789216040062>, chapter 1.

⁵ The seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, article 1).

⁶ The BBNJ Agreement, article 5, para 1.

⁷ A/RES/78/272, para 2.

⁸ Pursuant to article 68, para 1, the BBNJ Agreement will enter into force 120 days after the deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession. As of 18 March 2025, there were 112 signatories to the Agreement, with 20 of them having also ratified it.

resources, including a new fund,⁹ and agreeing on institutional arrangements for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the work undertaken under the CBD.¹⁰ In addition, agreement was reached on the modalities for the modification of descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and the description of new areas.¹¹

9. More specifically, on target 1 of Sustainable Development Goal 14, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee established by resolution 5/14 of the United Nations Environment Assembly, advanced on its work to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The instrument, according to the resolution, is to be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal. In 2025, the Committee will resume negotiations on the basis of a draft text presented by the Chair at the closing of the fifth session, in December 2024.

10. Regarding prevention of pollution from vessels, in 2023, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted a revised strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships and approved the revised Guidelines for the Reduction of Underwater Radiated Noise from Shipping to Address Adverse Impacts on Marine Life and, in 2024, it adopted guidelines on life cycle GHG intensity of marine fuels. With the risks of marine pollution from bunker oil spills growing, due to increased maritime traffic, a further positive development is that the 2001 International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage currently counts 107 parties.¹² In addition, applying the Revised Guidelines for the identification and designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas, the IMO decided to designate two new Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas.¹³

11. Given the alarming impacts of climate change on the ocean, marine species and coastal ecosystems, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2015 Paris Agreement are essential to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14. First established by the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, the annual ocean and climate change dialogues provide a unique forum for enhancing collaboration by mobilizing all actors, improving understanding of the ocean-climate nexus and building ocean-based climate action. In 2023, the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, encouraged further strengthening of ocean-based action, as appropriate.¹⁴ The Outcome of the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement notes in that regard that ecosystem-based approaches, including ocean-based adaptation and resilience measures can reduce a range of climate change risks and provide multiple co-benefits.¹⁵

⁹ Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Digital sequence information on genetic resources*, decision 16/2.

¹⁰ Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Institutional arrangements for the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the work undertaken under the Convention on Biological Diversity*, decision 16/5.

¹¹ Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Further work on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas*, decision 16/16.

¹² Iraq, Sao Tome and Principe and Turkmenistan are the last three States having acceded to the 2001 Convention after the 2022 UN Ocean Conference.

¹³ The North-Western Mediterranean Sea, in 2023, and the Nusa Penida Islands and Gili Matra Islands in Lombok Strait, in 2024.

¹⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Outcome of the first global stocktake*, decision 1/CMA.5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (para 56).

12. In the period leading to the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference, the role of international courts and tribunals has been instrumental in clarifying the international obligations concerning the protection and preservation of the marine environment. In May 2024, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea delivered unanimously its Advisory Opinion on the *Request submitted to the Tribunal by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law*. The Tribunal recognized that the obligation under article 192 of the Convention to protect and preserve the marine environment has a broad scope, encompassing any type of harm or threat to the marine environment, and that the adverse effects of climate change and ocean acidification satisfy the criterion relating to “deleterious effects” under article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention, thereby concluding that anthropogenic GHG emissions into the atmosphere constitute pollution of the marine environment. The advisory opinion is directly relevant to Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 14, including particularly its targets 1 and 3. In another case still pending before the International Court of Justice, the General Assembly requested the Court to render an advisory opinion on the *Obligations of States in respect of climate change*, having regard to a variety of international legal instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

13. In terms of **sustainable fisheries**, the obligations set out in the Convention in relation to the conservation and sustainable management of living resources are further elaborated in the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement as they relate to straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. The Convention and the Fish Stocks Agreement, which currently has 93 parties,¹⁶ are supplemented by other instruments, including global and regional treaties and guidelines, such as those developed under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and under regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements.

14. Relevant FAO legally binding instruments include the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing (Port State Measures Agreement) and the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement). A positive trend since the 2022 United Nations Conference is the increase in the number of ratifications and accessions to the Port State Measures Agreement which currently has 81 parties.¹⁷ Many of those States are also parties to the Compliance Agreement which currently has 45 parties.¹⁸ In 2023, the parties to the Port State Measures Agreement adopted the Bali Strategy to improve the effectiveness of the Agreement and launched the Global Information Exchange System. Given the reported overfishing of a third of the world’s fish stocks and the persistent problem of IUU fishing, the implementation of the obligations under both the Port States Measures Agreement and the Compliance Agreement is critical to achieving target 14.c of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as targets 14.2 and 14.4.¹⁹

15. Developments relating to relevant FAO non-legally binding instruments since 2022 include the adoption by the FAO Committee on Fisheries of the Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment and the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture, the latter supporting the effective implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in the aquaculture sector. In addition, as the custodian agency for SDG target

¹⁶ A year after the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, in June 2023, Saudi Arabia acceded to the Fish Stock Agreement, thus becoming the ninety-third party to the Agreement.

¹⁷ Eight of those Parties ratified or acceded to the Agreement after the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference. For the current status of the Agreement, see: <https://www.fao.org/treaties/results/details/en/c/TRE-000003/>.

¹⁸ For the current status of the Agreement, see: <https://www.fao.org/treaties/results/details/en/c/TRE-000023/>

¹⁹ Contribution of the FAO.

14.b, FAO has continued to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, adopted in 2014, and, in that context, it hosted the 2nd Small-Scale Fisheries Summit, in 2024, in Rome.²⁰

16. Regarding target 14.6, the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies which was adopted by the twelfth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in June 2022, will enter into force upon acceptance by two thirds of the WTO members.²¹ To date, the Agreement has been accepted by 64 members. As the first WTO agreement to focus on the environment and ensuring ocean sustainability, it aims to reduce harmful fishing activities by prohibiting subsidies that support IUU fishing, fishing activities on overfished stocks and fishing outside of the jurisdiction of coastal States or the competence of regional fisheries management organizations.²²

17. In 2023, the resumed Review Conference on the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement reaffirmed the commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, as reflected in Goal 14 noting, in particular, the interrelationship between achieving some of the targets listed therein and the effective implementation of the Fish Stocks Agreement and the recommendations of the Review Conference.

18. Furthermore, of relevance to targets 14.2 and 14.4 were the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), at its 19th meeting, in November 2022, concerning the inclusion of more commercially exploited aquatic species in Appendix II of CITES.²³

19. In 2022, the latest full year for which data is available, total fisheries and aquaculture production from marine and coastal regions was around 151 million tonnes (FAO, 2024). Given that aquatic food systems contribute significantly to human nutrition and employ over 60 million people in the primary sector, while also supporting the livelihoods of an estimated 600 million people, their sustainable management is vital for addressing food insecurity and poverty worldwide. Improving the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture requires the effective implementation of the Convention, the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and other relevant instruments and measures, adopted at the international, regional, subregional and national levels.²⁴

20. In respect of **non-living marine resources**, the International Seabed Authority advanced its work towards the adoption of regulations for the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area. As the organization entrusted by the Convention and Part XI Agreement to organize and control all activities of exploration for, and exploitation of, the resources of the Area for the benefit of humankind as a whole, the Authority has to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from such activities. In discharging its mandate, the Authority has adopted three sets of regulations for the exploration of mineral resources in the Area. To date, the Authority has entered into 31 contracts for exploration activities in the Area with 22 contractors.²⁵ In addition, work to develop regulations for the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area started in 2014 and will continue during the thirtieth session of the Council, in 2025, in line with the revised road map

²⁰ *Idem.*

²¹ For the full list of the WTO members having accepted the Agreement, see: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_acceptances_e.htm.

²² Contribution of the FAO.

²³ *Idem.*

²⁴ *Idem.*

²⁵ <https://www.isa.org.jm/exploration-contracts/>.

endorsed by the Council in July 2024 and on the basis of a Revised Consolidated Text of the Draft Exploitation Regulations issued by the President of the Council in November 2024.²⁶ The outcome of this process will further contribute to the mandate of the Authority under the Convention and Part XI Agreement.²⁷

21. With regard to **marine scientific research**, Part XIII of the Convention sets out a comprehensive legal framework for the promotion and conduct of marine scientific research which is key for increasing the scientific understanding of the ocean and thereby contributing to the realization of Goal 14, including particularly its target 14.a. Part XIV of the Convention which is dedicated to promoting the development and transfer of marine science and marine technology plays a critical role in underpinning effective implementation of Part XIII. The BBNJ Agreement also contains a dedicated part VI on capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, which is expected to support the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Convention.

22. As the competent organization in the field of marine scientific research under the Convention, and as mandated by the General Assembly, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) is responsible for the implementation of the 2021-2030 United Nations Ocean Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development which constitutes a global action framework for the co-design and co-delivery of ocean science and knowledge to underpin sustainable development, working across ten Ocean Decade Challenges that have a strong alignment with the targets of Goal 14. The State of the Ocean Report 2024 offers insights on ocean-related scientific activities towards the achievement of the Ocean Decade objectives.

23. Established by the General Assembly, the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process), through its World Ocean Assessments, provides a synthesis of the latest science available on the state of the world's ocean and the social, economic and cultural activities that take place in relation to the ocean. The World Ocean Assessments, which constitute the only global ocean assessments mandated by the General Assembly, provide key information of use by decision-makers for achieving sustainable management of the ocean and provide support to ocean-related processes, contributing to the achievement, in particular, of target 14a. The Regular Process is currently progressing work towards delivering its third World Ocean Assessment, which will be submitted to the General Assembly towards the end of 2025. Furthermore, in 2024, the General Assembly decided to launch the fourth cycle of the Regular Process from 2026 to 2030.²⁸

III. Challenges and opportunities

General

24. The growing number of international treaties and instruments that States have agreed on, or on which negotiations have advanced, since the second United Nations Ocean Conference, marks important progress towards strengthening the international legal framework to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources.²⁹ However, it can be challenging to ensure consistency in the continued development and implementation of international law across relevant legal instruments and frameworks.³⁰

²⁶ Contribution of the ISA.

²⁷ *Idem*.

²⁸ A/RES/79/144, para 333.

²⁹ Contribution of the World Bank.

³⁰ Contribution of the World Bank.

25. The level of participation to international legal instruments is a key factor for their effectiveness. The General Assembly has consistently encouraged States that have not done so to become parties to relevant instruments and has also called upon them to implement their obligations.³¹ However, capacity gaps and financial constraints continue to be the primary limiting factors, in particular, for developing States. Such constraints are exacerbated by the growing number of relevant legal instruments.³² While financial resources are available to support States in their efforts to become parties to and implement such instruments, access to the resources may be hampered by limited capabilities of interested States in identifying and assessing their capacity needs and priorities.³³

26. In some cases, a low level of participation has prevented or delayed the entry into force of international legal instruments or hampered the effectiveness in achieving their objectives.³⁴ Several instruments adopted under the auspices of the IMO have not yet entered into force.³⁵ For example, the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, as amended by the 2010 Protocol, has been ratified by only eight States to date.³⁶ While the required number of ratifications (12) for its entry into force is coming within reach, a much broader participation is needed to ensure that this convention becomes effective in reaching its objectives.³⁷

27. Furthermore, the full and effective implementation of the Convention and related instruments is of vital importance for the realization of the objective of conserving and sustainably using the ocean and its resources. However, challenges in implementing the Convention remain, especially for developing States, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, given their special circumstances. The lack of financial and human resources, scientific knowledge and technical know-how needed to implement, monitor and enforce relevant measures prevents those States from effectively participating in, and benefiting from, activities in the ocean. In addition, there is recognition that the provisions of the Convention related to capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology have not been implemented effectively.³⁸ The BBNJ Agreement presents an important opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the Convention, including through the provision of capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology which shall be based on and be responsive to the needs and

³¹ A/RES/79/144, preamble, paras 2, 3, 193, and more.

³² Contribution of the World Bank.

³³ Contribution of the World Bank.

³⁴ Concept paper from the first UN Ocean Conference, Partnership 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.

³⁵ Concept paper for interactive dialogue 7 prepared by the Secretariat for the second UN Oceans Conference, A/CONF.230/2022/7, para 23.

³⁶ Harden-Davies, H., Amon, D.J., Chung, T.-R., Gobin, J., Hanich, Q., Hassanali, K. et al. (2022). How can a new UN ocean treaty change the course of capacity building? *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 32(5), 907–912; Blasiak, Yagi (2016). Shaping an international agreement on marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction: Lessons from high seas fisheries, *Marine Policy* 71 (2016) 210-216.

³⁷ Harden-Davies, H., Amon, D.J., Chung, T.-R., Gobin, J., Hanich, Q., Hassanali, K. et al. (2022). How can a new UN ocean treaty change the course of capacity building? *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 32(5), 907–912; Blasiak, Yagi (2016). Shaping an international agreement on marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction: Lessons from high seas fisheries, *Marine Policy* 71 (2016) 210-216.

³⁸ Harden-Davies, H., Amon, D.J., Chung, T.-R., Gobin, J., Hanich, Q., Hassanali, K. et al. (2022). How can a new UN ocean treaty change the course of capacity building? *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 32(5), 907–912; Blasiak, Yagi (2016). Shaping an international agreement on marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction: Lessons from high seas fisheries, *Marine Policy* 71 (2016) 210-216.

priorities of developing States, taking into account the special circumstances of small island developing States and of least developed countries.³⁹ The provisions of the BBNJ Agreement on funding, including the establishment of a financial mechanism to support developing States in implementing the Agreement, will also be key for the mobilization of financial resources in support of the realization of the objectives of the Agreement and, thereby, of global efforts to improve the health and resilience of the ocean.

Protection and preservation of the marine environment and conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity

28. With the BBNJ Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework recently adopted and a new legally binding instrument on plastic pollution under negotiation, the opportunities stemming from the growing number of international legal instruments are particularly visible in the context of the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity.

29. The BBNJ Agreement recognizes the need to address, in a coherent and cooperative manner, biological diversity loss and degradation of ecosystems of the ocean. The momentum towards its swift entry into force and effective implementation creates an unparalleled opportunity for global efforts to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction which cover nearly two thirds of the ocean.⁴⁰ When in force, it is expected that the Agreement will contribute to addressing the uneven capacity of States to carry out and benefit from activities with respect to marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction and digital sequence information on such resources, ensuring that such activities are in the interests of all States and for the benefit of all humanity, and that the benefits arising from these activities will be shared fairly and equitably. The Agreement also provides for the establishment of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, in areas beyond national jurisdiction, thereby contributing to protecting, preserving, restoring and maintaining biological diversity and ecosystems and strengthening resilience to stressors, including those related to climate change, ocean acidification and marine pollution. The Agreement further aims to assist in preventing, mitigating and managing adverse impacts of planned activities on the marine environment, including through its provisions on environmental impact assessments. In addition, the Agreement makes important strides towards strengthening the capacity of States to participate in activities undertaken in areas beyond national jurisdiction and implement its provisions in furtherance of the Agreement's objectives by requiring cooperation to assist Parties, particularly developing States Parties, through capacity-building and the development and transfer of marine technology. Increased access to the latest scientific expertise and marine technology can assist States in protecting and preserving the marine environment more effectively.

30. The BBNJ Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework complement each other and are mutually supportive.⁴¹ Therefore, their effective implementation can bolster global efforts to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems.⁴²

31. In terms of efforts to tackle marine pollution, the General Assembly has recognized that most of the pollution load of the oceans emanate from land-based activities and affects the marine environment, including its most productive areas.⁴³

³⁹ See article 42, para 4, of the BBNJ Agreement.

⁴⁰ Contribution of the European Union.

⁴¹ *Idem.*

⁴² *Idem.*

⁴³ A/RES/79/144, para 243.

The ongoing negotiations within the intergovernmental negotiating committee convened to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, offer a unique opportunity to address in a comprehensive manner the serious environmental and human health risks posed by the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution, negatively impacting the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.⁴⁴ Although the committee has not concluded by December 2024, as initially envisaged, delegations agreed to resume negotiations in 2025 on the basis of a “Chair’s Text”. The conclusion of the negotiating process with the adoption of a new treaty may contribute significantly to strengthening the implementation of the provisions of Part XII of the Convention on the protection and preservation of the marine environment.⁴⁵

32. Furthermore, regarding pollution from vessels, the vision of the IMO Strategy on reduction of GHG emissions from ships, adopted in 2023, expresses IMO’s commitment to reducing emissions from international shipping and, as a matter of urgency, aims to phase them out as soon as possible, while promoting, in the context of the Strategy, a just and equitable transition. It has, among its objectives, to enhance IMO’s contribution to global efforts to address GHG emissions, in line with the Paris Agreement and its goals, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 13,⁴⁶ but it is also relevant for other goals and targets, including Goal 14 and targets 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3, 14.c.

33. Responsibility and liability for damages caused by pollution of the marine environment, ensuring the availability of appropriate compensation for such damages is critical, in particular for those that rely heavily on fisheries, aquaculture and tourism. It is therefore essential for relevant liability instruments to enter into force and, if they are already in force, to achieve greater participation. Ensuring the adequacy of levels of compensation available to claimants, especially with a view to advancing targets 14.7 and 14.c, is also critical.⁴⁷

Sustainable fisheries

34. The international framework applicable to fisheries as set out above provides a solid legal foundation to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources and biodiversity, and secure livelihoods for millions reliant on these industries. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these instruments are complied with and enforced.⁴⁸

35. The Fish Stocks Agreement places a particular emphasis on cooperation between States and elaborates responsibilities to enhance such cooperation, which presents both challenges and opportunities. The Fish Stocks Agreement has led to the establishment of an increasing number of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), which are the primary mechanism for the operationalization of the provisions on international cooperation under that Agreement and play a crucial role in achieving effective fisheries management and addressing the impacts of fisheries on marine biodiversity.⁴⁹

36. The impacts of climate change on marine resources are already evident and are projected to increase. Global projections of exploitable fish biomass show declines of more than 10 percent for most countries by mid-century, particularly under high emissions scenarios, with some of the largest declines for countries that substantially rely on protein

⁴⁴ United Nations Environment Assembly, *End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument*, UNEP/EA.5/Res.14.

⁴⁵ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, article 194 para 1.

⁴⁶ Marine Environment Protection Committee, Resolution MEPC. 377 (30), annex, para 1.10.

⁴⁷ Contribution of UNCTAD.

⁴⁸ Contribution of the FAO.

⁴⁹ *Idem*.

supply for aquatic foods or that are top producers in terms of global marine fisheries production.⁵⁰ As the science available to understand the impacts of climate change is improving, the adaptation of management and regulatory frameworks to respond to the impacts remains challenging. However, RFMOs are making important progress in understanding and addressing climate change effects on transboundary stocks and highly migratory species, and a number of them have adopted recommendations and resolutions on the impacts of climate change on fish stocks in recent years.⁵¹

Non-living resources

37. The Authority is currently working on the development of draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, which aim to balance economic needs with the effective protection of the marine environment, including biological diversity and ecological integrity.⁵² Once in place, the regulations will require any entity planning to undertake exploitation activities in the Area to abide by certain environmental standards, with a view to ensuring the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area, as required by the Convention. To date, the Authority has developed rules, regulations and procedures related to the assessment of possible environmental impacts arising from the exploration for mineral resources in the Area. In addition, the Authority is seeking to develop a standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environmental management plans (REMPs) which are designed to help the Authority identify and provide particular areas with appropriate levels of environmental protection from exploitation activities in the Area and thereby meet globally agreed goals and targets, including those of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 14.⁵³

Other issues

38. Relevant to multiple Sustainable Development Goals, maritime ports and infrastructure are important for global trade and development and serve as pivotal nodes in global supply chains. Ports and other critical transport infrastructure are projected to be at high and increasing risk of coastal flooding due to climate change, particularly in small island developing States. Effective adaptation measures are urgently needed, but there are challenges to the planning and implementation of such measures, including limited data availability, barriers to knowledge sharing, and inadequate human and financial resources to support capacity-building efforts.⁵⁴

39. The General Assembly has recognized the vital importance of submarine cables and pipelines to the global economy and the national security of all States and has urged States to improve the protection afforded thereto by adopting measures related to the prevention, reporting and investigation of acts of violence against such critical infrastructure and by implementing relevant measures to ensure proper and adequate enforcement.⁵⁵ Bearing in mind the potential significant risks posed to the global economy, the marine environment and the livelihoods of affected people by such acts of violence, it is crucial to intensify efforts to further international cooperation and support States, including through tailored technical assistance and

⁵⁰ Blanchard, J.L. & Novaglio, C., eds. 2024. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper, No. 707. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1379en>

⁵¹ Contribution of the FAO.

⁵² Council of the International Seabed Authority, *Draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, Revised consolidated text*, ISBA/30/C/CRP.1/ISBA/.

⁵³ Council of the International Seabed Authority, *Draft revised standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environment management plans*, ISBA/29/C/10.

⁵⁴ Contribution of UNCTAD.

⁵⁵ A/RES/79/144, paras 139, 170.

capacity-building programmes, in developing resilience and preparedness to disruptive incidents.

40. Recognizing the central role of the flag State in implementing and enforcing international law,⁵⁶ fraudulent ship registration and ship registries remain a significant issue which presents challenges across multiple SDGs⁵⁷ as it can impact, inter alia, maritime safety, security, pollution control and seafarers' welfare, as well as the prevention of IUU fishing. Under the auspices of the IMO, work to prevent fraudulent registrations is ongoing⁵⁸, including through proposals for the development of guidelines or best practices for the registration of ships.⁵⁹

41. Improving the situation of world's seafarers is a challenging task, as they often work in difficult conditions and are exposed to various occupational hazards. Drawing from the experiences of seafarers, including lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006,⁶⁰ which entered into force on 23 December 2024, further develop and implement provisions of the Convention on the duties of the flag State, including with regard to labour conditions, crewing and social matters on ships that fly its flag.⁶¹ This is important for advancing not only target 14.c but also Goal 8 and its targets 8.5 and 8.8.

IV. Action oriented pragmatic solutions

42. Addressing States' capacity and resource needs to overcome barriers to ratification and implementation of international legal instruments related to the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources, strengthening international cooperation, coordination and partnerships, enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement and participation, and promoting innovative science-based solutions are vital to the full realization of the benefits of the Convention and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14, including particularly its target 14.c.

43. The present section provides insights of concrete, action oriented, pragmatic solutions which seek to address challenges and leverage opportunities to support implementation of international law, as reflected in the Convention. Undertaken at multiple levels and engaging all relevant stakeholders, if scaled up, the various activities and initiatives highlighted below have the potential to have a positive impact on the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources and have a spillover effect on other ocean-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development.

⁵⁶ See, for example, A/RES/79/144, para 174.

⁵⁷ For example, the importance of developing and enforcing measures to prevent and combat crime, including all forms of fraudulent practices, is reflected in SDG 16 which relates to the promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

⁵⁸ A/RES/79/144, para 176.

⁵⁹ International Maritime Organization, Legal Committee, 111th session, 22-26 April 2024, LEG 111.

⁶⁰ International Labour Organization, *Legal Issues and International Labour Standards Section*, GB.346/LILS/3, para 17.

⁶¹ United Nations General Assembly, Note by the Secretary-General on the preparatory process of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, A/78/880, para 47.

A. Addressing capacity and resource constraints

44. In the context of its mandate to promote a better understanding and wider appreciation of the Convention and related instruments and assist with their uniform and consistent application and implementation, DOALOS has been providing capacity-building and other assistance, including through training, fellowships and technical assistance, as well as through financial support from voluntary trust funds, including to assist developing countries in attending various meetings of ocean-related processes held under the auspices of the General Assembly. Training and briefings are conducted in collaboration with partners under the PROBLUE trust fund of the World Bank, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. Through a project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, DOALOS provides capacity development and technical assistance for developing States to reinforce their capacity to implement the Convention and related agreements and to better harness the benefits of the sustainable ocean-based economy including through more effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the context of a capacity-building project funded by the European Union through the Assistance Fund established under Part VII of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, DOALOS, in collaboration with the FAO, issued a guide for raising awareness and strengthening implementation of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement in 2024. With the support of The Nippon Foundation, DOALOS manages three fellowship programmes (UNNE, Strategic Needs, and Ocean Governance for SIDS) and supports a network of 291 alumni from 102 States. For over twenty years, Alumni have actively contributed to ocean sustainability in various capacities at the national and regional levels.

45. In support of States' efforts to become parties to the BBNJ Agreement and prepare for its implementation, a wide range of capacity-building and technical assistance activities have been undertaken by States, the Secretariat, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. As requested by the General Assembly, DOALOS which serves as the interim secretariat of the Agreement, has developed a programme of activities to promote a better understanding of the BBNJ Agreement and prepare for its entry into force.⁶² In that context, during 2024, DOALOS delivered five regional workshops, organized online briefings and side events, published a series of factsheets on the Agreement and launched a new website for the Agreement.⁶³ DOALOS is also undertaking additional capacity-building activities for the Agreement under a project funded by the European Union.

46. Furthermore, in response to the inclusion of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) trust fund as part of the financial mechanism under the BBNJ Agreement,⁶⁴ the GEF Council approved initial guidelines for enabling activities and ratification support projects to promote early entry into force and implementation readiness for the BBNJ Agreement.⁶⁵ Support is to be provided at the global and regional levels, as well as at the national level up to \$175.000 per State.

47. More generally, within the United Nations system, IOC-UNESCO adopted the Capacity Development Strategy (2023-2030) which provides a strategic framework of outputs and relevant capacity development activities and actions that respond to regional and national priorities based on top capacity-building needs identified through the use of capacity needs assessments and regional consultations.

48. The Authority facilitates various training programmes, projects and initiatives. These include national capacity development workshops, the ISA Joint Training and

⁶² AA/RES/77/321, paragraph 3

⁶³ See <https://www.un.org/bbnjagreement/en>

⁶⁴ Article 52, paragraph 4

⁶⁵ See GEF Council Decision 14/2024

Research Centres, the Contractors' Training Programme and the ISA Partnership Fund.⁶⁶ In November 2022, the Authority adopted its Capacity Development Strategy.⁶⁷ Since 1994, more than 1,000 individuals have benefited from capacity development initiatives implemented by the Authority.⁶⁸

49. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has developed sustainable and resilient freight transportation and trade logistics capacity-building tools, training, instruments, insights, knowledge products and guidance. They include the UNCTAD Toolbox, covering technical assistance, including methodological tools, as well as training and guidance materials relating to climate change impacts and adaptation for critical coastal transport infrastructure in SIDS (SIDSport-ClimateAdapt), which are aimed at achieving concrete, measurable results in support of States' efforts to put in place the policies, regulations and institutional frameworks and mobilizing the resources needed to fulfill the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda.⁶⁹ In addition, UNCTAD implements a development account project which is expected to further assist and support decarbonization efforts in the Caribbean and under the UNCTAD 2024 SIDS strategy⁷⁰ through evidence-based climate action by leveraging artificial intelligence and data innovation tools to estimate carbon emissions from the shipping and fisheries sectors.

50. The World Bank supports States by promoting strong governance of marine and coastal resources to improve their contribution to sustainable and inclusive economies through analytics, knowledge products, technical expertise, and financing, with a focus on sustainable ocean-based economy. The Bank's engagement in sustainable ocean-based economy is supported by PROBLUE, an umbrella multi-donor trust fund which aims to support a healthy and productive ocean and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.⁷¹ In 2023, PROBLUE's fourth year of operation, its portfolio grew considerably to a total of \$144 million.

51. Finally, at the regional level, RFMOs contribute to capacity-building by supporting their members' efforts to ratify and implement relevant international agreements. For example, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) is developing a regional repository of national legislation, GFCM-LEX, that assists States in identifying gaps in their national legal frameworks governing fisheries and aquaculture and improving the level of compliance with their international obligations.⁷²

⁶⁶ <https://www.isa.org.jm/publications/capacity-development-strategy/>.

⁶⁷ [ISBA/27/A/5](#).

⁶⁸ Contribution of the ISA.

⁶⁹ Contribution of UNCTAD.

⁷⁰ See: https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/aldcinf2024d1_en.pdf

⁷¹ Contribution of the World Bank.

⁷² Contribution of the FAO.

B. Enhancing cooperation, coordination and partnerships and promoting multi-stakeholder engagement

52. The Convention provides a framework for international cooperation in the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources, and its effective implementation requires effective cooperation and coordination at all levels.

53. Furthering international cooperation and coordination are also at the heart of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and the BBNJ Agreement. The BBNJ Agreement will provide further opportunities for enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation, and greater coherence and coordination with and among relevant instruments, frameworks and bodies.

54. Building partnerships and mobilizing and engaging all relevant actors are also critical for accelerating ocean action and achieving Goal 14 and its targets. Relevant stakeholders include a range of global and regional entities, national and local governments, the private sector, the scientific community and civil society. Ocean action needs to be inclusive of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, vulnerable groups, women, and youth. In taking measures to protect and preserve the marine environment and conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, it is critical that the rights, interests and concerns of people whose livelihoods depend on the ocean and its resources are taken into account. States are required to consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous Peoples in order to obtain, their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them,⁷³ and relevant traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, where available, should be used,⁷⁴ along with the best available science and scientific information.

55. Concrete examples of relevant recent initiatives are highlighted below with a focus on efforts to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination and promote inclusive participation and multi-stakeholder engagement.

56. UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority, within existing resources, in conformity with the Convention, the respective competencies of each of its participating organizations and the mandates and priorities approved by their respective governing bodies.⁷⁵ It currently consists of 31 United Nations agencies and the International Seabed Authority. In January 2024, the principals of organizations participating in UN-Oceans endorsed a statement of commitment to strengthen and promote coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities in relation to the BBNJ Agreement.

57. Cognizant that small island developing States (SIDS) are faced with unique challenges when implementing international instruments, frameworks and policies, the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in May 2024, culminated in the adoption of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, in which States reaffirmed their commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and emphasized the need to build SIDS' capacity in understanding their rights, obligations, and responsibilities under the Convention, including enabling their effective participation in activities under the Convention.⁷⁶

⁷³ A/RES/61/295, article 19.

⁷⁴ Contribution of Norway.

⁷⁵ A/RES/68/70, annex.

⁷⁶ Contribution of OHRLLS.

58. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) is a global platform coordinated by the Convention on Biological Diversity, which aims to build partnerships and enhance capacity to conserve and sustainably use marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner. Convened in Seoul (Republic of Korea), in 2024, the fourth meeting of the SOI Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies focused on sharing experiences on their respective work and cross-sectoral cooperation in support of achieving global goals and targets, as well as identifying means and approaches to enhance cooperation between these bodies within and across regions.

59. The GEF funded Common Oceans Programme brings together 65 partners under five projects to foster cooperation and collaboration to demonstrate and promote more comprehensive processes and integrated approaches for the sustainable management of fisheries and the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.⁷⁷

60. Implemented through the IMO, in partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank, the FIN-SMART Roundtable is a platform for regular dialogue amongst key maritime stakeholders on addressing the financial challenges pertaining to the transition towards more sustainable and resilient shipping, particularly for Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

61. In terms of sustainable fisheries, science-manager-stakeholder dialogues are increasingly being used to advance emerging issues in national and regional fisheries management organizations to tackle complex issues including climate change, ecosystem approach to fisheries management, and harvest strategies. Funded by the GEF and led by the FAO, the Common Oceans Tuna project, currently undergoing its second phase (2022-2027), aims to advance responsible tuna fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction through a participatory approach, using “skipper workshops” which bring together scientists, captains and crews to develop bycatch mitigation tools and techniques and exchange best practices, providing a model that can be extended beyond tuna fisheries.⁷⁸

62. Furthermore, coalitions can play an important role in promoting international cooperation by building and keeping up the momentum to address global challenges in a collaborative manner. The High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction was first launched at the One Ocean Summit in 2022 to bring together States committed to achieving an ambitious BBNJ Agreement. The Coalition is now focused on supporting ratification and implementation efforts.

63. Finally, the upcoming UN Decade of Sustainable Transport⁷⁹ offers new opportunities for collaborative action to strengthen the policy and legal framework for sustainable maritime transport and thereby contribute to the attainment of several of the SDGs, including Goal 14, in which transport plays a central role. Also relevant in the context of promoting cooperative solutions to align trade and economic policies with ocean sustainability were several of the recommendations of the 5th UN Oceans Forum on the trade-related aspects of SDG 14 co-hosted by France and Costa Rica.⁸⁰

C. Promoting innovative science-based solutions

⁷⁷ Contribution of the FAO.

⁷⁸ *Idem*.

⁷⁹ A/RES/78/148.

⁸⁰ Chairs' Summary Of Recommendations for the 5th United Nations Ocean Forum on Trade-related aspects of SDG 14 available at <https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/ditc-06032025-5unof-chairs-summary-format-vfinal.pdf>; contribution of UNCTAD

64. The achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its targets require a strong science-policy interface to provide timely, credible and salient scientific information to inform policies and actions.⁷ Science, especially new technologies, also play an increasingly critical role in support of monitoring, control and surveillance activities, thereby contributing to the effective implementation, compliance with and enforcement of international law, as reflected in the Convention.

65. To address the uneven distribution of ocean science across geographies, generations and genders and support individuals and institutions in developing the skills to deliver sustainable and science-based ocean solutions worldwide, the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development launched, in 2023, a new Capacity Development Facility which provides an interface to increase access to capacity development initiatives for partners engaged in the Ocean decade, with a focus on early career ocean professionals, and representatives of SIDS and least developed countries.

66. Under the Convention, the Authority is required to promote and encourage the conduct of marine scientific research, as well as to coordinate and disseminate the results of such research and analysis when available.⁸¹ In that context, the secretariat of the Authority has continued to support the implementation of the ISA Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research in support of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Moreover, critical information on deep-sea environments in the Area has been acquired through the exploration activities of contractors.⁸²

67. 2023 marked the start of a new phase of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) Nansen Programme, which is a partnership between the FAO, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Institute of Marine Research in Norway, regional fisheries organizations and 32 partner States in Africa and the Bay of Bengal. In line with the FAO Blue Transformation vision, the Programme supports its partner States in generating scientific knowledge on marine resources and ecosystems by collecting unique data and information related to fisheries and other issues high on the global agenda, such as biodiversity, climate change and pollution. The Programme also supports the strengthening of partner States' policy and legal frameworks to enhance alignment with the EAF.

68. In addition, RFMOs contribute to advancing scientific research through technical assistance and capacity development programmes, such as the GFCM MedSea4Fish programme, which supports members of the GFCM in acquiring high quality data and information, best practices, tools and technologies.⁸³

69. Finally, technological evolution presents substantive opportunities for the management and conservation of marine resources, and to support the implementation of national, regional and global obligations and commitments. Technology, including satellite imagery, vessel monitoring systems, electronic product traceability and documentation systems, as well as remote data entry and reporting capabilities are becoming increasingly accessible and efficient at providing real time data to support monitoring, compliance, science and management of marine resources.⁸⁴

70. More specifically, collecting data from small scale fisheries is a challenging task in many regions, and particularly in developing States with limited monitoring capacity. Small scale and artisanal fishers often operate, land and sell their produce in remote locations, making data collection efforts patchy, slow and expensive. Mobile technology is allowing

⁸¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, art.143.

⁸² Contribution of the ISA.

⁸³ Contribution of the FAO.

⁸⁴ *Idem*.

for significant improvements in data collection, such as through the smartphone and tablet application (“Tails”) being used in a number of Pacific Island States, that allows catch information to be collected in remote locations and instantly sent for analysis, even when internet connectivity is limited. In addition, the use of local ecological knowledge and community-based data collection programmes has proven to be a cost-effective mechanism to enhance the data available for science and management of fisheries, for example in the Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries where local ecological knowledge is used to support management decisions in the region.⁸⁵

V. Conclusions and recommendations

71. The Convention provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. Therefore, the effective implementation of international law, as reflected in the Convention, is vital for enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources and, thereby, achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14. Since the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, significant legal developments have taken place in key areas of relevance to Goal 14.

72. The progress made in the legal field offers new opportunities for enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. However, challenges remain, in particular for developing countries, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. To overcome impending challenges and fully harness new opportunities, it is essential to remove capacity and resource barriers preventing States from becoming parties to and implementing the Convention and related instruments. Concluding ongoing processes, supporting partnerships and collaborative, multi-stakeholder initiatives at all levels as well as promoting innovative science-based solutions are equally critical steps for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources through implementing international law.

73. Building on the discussions and commitments made at the 2017 and 2022 United Nations Ocean Conferences, the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference offers a unique opportunity to take stock of the progress made so far and explore new and innovative approaches to concrete action, including through the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources for sustainable development.

74. Exploring and leveraging synergies between relevant legal instruments and frameworks, promoting universal participation and full implementation of the Convention and related instruments, and supporting States’ compliance with their international obligations, including through robust capacity-building, should guide action towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14.

VI. Guiding questions

75. The following guiding questions may be used to inform the dialogue:

- (a) How can the implementation of international law, as reflected in the Convention, contribute to scaling up ocean action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14?
- (b) How can cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination be mobilized to support the effective implementation of international law, as reflected in the Convention?

⁸⁵ *Idem.*

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- (c) How can United Nations system entities further support Member States in their efforts to meet their obligations under the Convention and related instruments?
 - (d) How can interlinkages and synergies among relevant legal instruments be leveraged to support the effective implementation of international law, as reflected in the Convention?
 - (e) What are the most pressing capacity and resource needs to enable adherence to and implementation of the Convention and related instruments, and how can innovative capacity-building contribute to meeting these needs?
 - (f) How can new technologies and science-based decision-making contribute to enhancing implementation of international law, as reflected in the Convention?
 - (g) How can inclusive participation in ocean-related processes and active engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including the most vulnerable ones, most effectively contribute to the objective of conserving and sustainably using the ocean and its resources?