

Statement on Behalf of the Government of The Bahamas

OCEAN ACTION PANEL 10– *“Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the UNCLOS”*

SPEAKER’S TIME LIMIT: 3 MINUTES

Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Partners,

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is honoured to contribute to this important dialogue. As a SIDS and a maritime nation, The Bahamas regards UNCLOS as the bedrock upon which we base our national maritime policies, conservation and sustainability strategies, and our international engagement. To this end, we have taken progressive steps to align our national frameworks with our UNCLOS obligations, including:

- Enacting modern maritime legislation to enhance the governance of our Exclusive Economic Zone and continental shelf;
- Expanding and enforcing marine protected areas through partnerships with civil society and the private sector;
- Advancing our marine spatial planning processes to balance conservation and economic uses, including fisheries, tourism, and shipping; and
- Supporting regional and international efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and transnational maritime crime.

The implementing agreements and arrangements under UNCLOS, including the BBNJ Agreement, the International Seabed Authority’s draft mining regulations, the negotiations on the plastics treaty and the jurisprudence of international tribunals reflect the evolution of our understanding of ocean governance and, critically, must reflect the principles of equity, sustainability, precaution, and the polluter pays in the context of "common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR).

Regarding the most pressing capacity and resource needed to effectively implement international law to enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, we highlight that technical assistance programmes should be guided by the experts and technicians at the national level.

Specifically, we call for:

1. Knowledge and technology sharing and transfer that is relevant, valuable, and readily accessible;
2. Adaptable technology and tools, informed by the experiences of SIDS, LCD's and LLC's, that allow for more informed and efficient implementation by practitioners and technicians at the national level.
3. Greater support for capacity-building in marine scientific research, hydrographic surveying, and digital mapping;
4. Enhanced cooperation and coordination among RFMO's in the Caribbean and wider Atlantic regions in maritime security, sustainable fisheries management, and capacity-building;
5. Strengthening inclusive participation in negotiations and institutions established under UNCLOS, its implementing agreements and other relevant international instruments;
6. Timely ratification and operationalization of the BBNJ Agreement, including support for implementation efforts that is timely and responsive;
7. Financial resources committed to long-term projects and human resource development; and
8. Innovative funding solutions supported by accountable and effective financial mechanisms.

In reflecting on how the United Nations system entities can further support Member States, we acknowledge and applaud the pivotal role that UN-Oceans has played in enhancing coordination among the organisations' mechanisms and welcome the statement of commitment to strengthen and promote coordination and coherence of UN system activities related to the BBNJ Agreement.

The Bahamas has directly benefitted from the capacity-building assistance DOALOS has provided through training, fellowships and technical assistance, as well as through financial support from voluntary trust funds and we call on member states to continue to support those efforts.

As stewards of vast marine spaces and rich biodiversity, SIDS like The Bahamas stands ready to work with our partners to find solutions grounded in traditional knowledge, community-based management, and a shared commitment to ocean health.

The Bahamas remains fully committed to upholding the rule of law at sea and working collaboratively to safeguard the ocean for present and future generations.

Thank you.