



**Statement by**  
**Ms. Rabab Fatima**  
**Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the**  
**Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries**  
**and Small Island Developing States**

**at the**  
**General Debate of the**  
**Third UN Conference on the Ocean**  
**Nice, France**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Friends of the Ocean,**

**We gather in Nice at a defining moment - one that demands urgent and united action to safeguard the ocean that sustains all life on our planet.**

**The science is clear.**

**The ocean absorbs over 90 percent of the excess heat generated by greenhouse gas emissions.**

**Yet it is choking on 11 million metric tons of plastic every year.**

**One-third of global fish stocks are overexploited – undermining global food security and livelihoods.**

**And SDG 14 continues to face the largest financing gap of all SDGs – estimated at \$149 billion annually<sup>1</sup>.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/news/keeping-momentum-ocean-action-investing-sdg-14-25034>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X19305111>

**This is not just a financing failure.**

**It reflects a strategic failure to protect one of our most vital global commons.**

**And once again, it is the most vulnerable who suffer the most.**

**The Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States, home to 1.4 billion people, who bear the heaviest brunt of climate-induced ocean challenges, from sea level rise and ocean acidification to biodiversity loss and declining fisheries.**

**Despite their diverse geographies, their priorities converge on three core principles: equity, access and accountability.**

**Equity:** to ensure the benefits and responsibilities of ocean stewardship are shared fairly.

**Access:** to finance, technology, knowledge, and opportunity.

**Accountability:** to deliver on the commitments we make as an international community.

**Guided by these principles, I urge this Conference to rally around three immediate priorities in support of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS:**

**First** – Scale up blue finance.

**Sustainable ocean action requires predictable, and long-term investment.**

**We must unlock new resources of financing through blue bonds, blended finance, and dedicated funding windows for blue economies in multilateral development banks.**

**Blue finance must be mainstreamed as a central pillar of sustainable development, not as a cosmetic solution.**

**Second** – Build a coalition for sustainable connectivity.

**LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS must be fully integrated into global trade systems.**

**This means modernizing land, river, and sea routes, expanding digital trade tools like smart logistics and paperless customs, and upholding the transit rights of LLDCs under UNCLOS.**

**Third** – Strengthen coastal resilience and early warning systems.

**As climate risks intensify, we must urgently protect the world's most vulnerable coastlines - especially in SIDS and coastal LDCs.**

**We must fulfill the promise of the Early Warnings for All initiative: to ensure that every person, everywhere, is protected by lifesaving early-warning systems by 2027.**

**This means investing in scientific cooperation, real-time data sharing, and traditional knowledge - because resilience is strongest when it is community-led.**

**Excellencies,**

**Supporting LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS in advancing their ocean priorities is not an option or an act of charity - it is a strategic imperative.**

**It is an investment in the credibility of multilateralism, and the realization of the 2030 Agenda.**

**Let us act with urgency and resolve to make the planet a better place for our future generations. because, as a well-known saying reminds us, “we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children”.**

**Thank you.**