

## OECD intervention at UNOC General Debate

UN PLENARY MEETING ROOM

Nice, 12 June 2025

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### REMARKS

- Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
- Thank you for the invitation to share the perspectives of the OECD.
- We meet at a pivotal moment for the ocean and the ocean economy.
- As highlighted in the recent OECD flagship report *The Ocean Economy to 2025*, over the past quarter-century, the ocean economy has contributed between 3% and 4% of global gross value added, with an average growth rate of 2.8% per year.
- If considered a country, the ocean economy would rank as the fifth largest economy in the world.
- This growth presents a wide horizon of opportunity—from sustainable tourism to innovation in maritime transport, ocean research, and emerging sectors powered by digitalisation and robotics.
- However, as underscored throughout this UN Ocean Conference, its long-term success depends on how well we address the threats of today, including overfishing, pollution, and resource degradation.
- Sustainable Development Goal 14, on the “conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources”, provides a roadmap, with science- and evidence- based decisions playing a key role.

- At the OECD, we are committed to supporting countries with the data, evidence, analysis, policy tools and recommendations they need to strengthen the ocean economy while preserving its ecological foundations.
  - **Our OECD Ocean Economy Monitor Programme** observes, tracks, analyses and reports on ocean economy trends over time.
  - As part of this work, we support countries in developing ocean accounts that track key indicators such as economic output, consumption, investment, and employment.
  - These accounts allow us to estimate that ocean-related economic activities generate over 2 trillion US dollars in value added and support hundreds of millions of jobs around the world.
  - Building on this work, we are now expanding the data to include carbon emissions, habitat pressures, and the value of ecosystem services.
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- **In the area of fisheries**, we are working to promote sustainability.
  - Our Fisheries Support Estimate Database reveals that, between 2020 and 2022, governments spent USD 10.7 billion annually in fisheries support - 65% of which risks promoting unsustainable fishing unless accompanied by robust management and enforcement.

- In response, the OECD adopted a *Recommendation on Eliminating Government Support to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing* at our Annual Council Meeting last week, offering concrete guidance on subsidies, legal frameworks, and exchange of fishing data, reinforcing efforts taking place at the World Trade Organization.
- **Equally important is ensuring that development co-operation helps partner countries harness the full potential of their ocean economies.**
- Many developing nations face significant barriers—financial, technical, institutional—that constrain their capacity to transition toward sustainable ocean sectors.
- Although ocean-related development assistance rose from USD 3.5 billion in 2022 to USD 5 billion in 2023, 80% remains focused on transport, fisheries, and conservation. More can be done to unlock new sources of sustainable growth—including offshore renewable energy, marine biotechnology, and sustainable aquaculture.
- Last Friday, the OECD launched its new *Guidance on Development Co-operation for a Sustainable Ocean Economy*, offering a practical blueprint for effective, targeted and catalytic finance.
- The OECD will continue supporting countries as they develop policies to ensure that sustainability and economic opportunity go hand in hand.
- Thank you.