



Division for Sustainable Development Goals
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations

**Meeting of the Communities of Ocean Action
From Commitments to Action: Implementing SDG14**

30–31 May 2019
Incheon, Republic of Korea

Background Note

Session I

From 2017 to 2020: Experiences from the UN Ocean Conference in 2017 and looking ahead to Lisbon in 2020

Background

The 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 (The Ocean Conference), held at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 9 June 2017, raised awareness about the deteriorating health of the world’s ocean and produced ambitious outcomes, including an intergovernmentally agreed political declaration “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, the co-chairs’ summaries of seven partnership dialogues, and around 1400 voluntary commitments (VCs) from Governments, the UN system, IGOs, civil society organizations, academia, the scientific community, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

In the Call for Action, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/312, Member States agreed on the follow-up to The Ocean Conference, inter alia:

- “Welcome the follow-up on the partnership dialogues and commit to implementing our respective voluntary commitments made in the context of the Conference”; (Paragraph 13 (t))
- “Contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda by providing an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development on the implementation of Goal 14, including on opportunities to strengthen progress in the future”; (Paragraph 13 (u))
- “Consider further ways and means to support the timely and effective implementation of Goal 14, taking into account the discussions at the high-level political forum during its first cycle”. (Paragraph 13 (v))



Subsequently, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development welcomed the outcome of The Ocean Conference and took note of its seven partnership dialogues, and called upon all stakeholders to urgently undertake, inter alia, the actions highlighted in the call for action adopted during that Conference and by implementing the respective voluntary commitments pledged by individual Member States and other stakeholders during the Conference (E/HLS/2017/1).

In September 2017, Ambassador Peter Thomson was appointed as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean. Furthermore, to follow up on the VCs made in the context of The Ocean Conference, the United Nations launched nine thematic multi-stakeholder Communities of Ocean Action (COAs) in November 2017.

On 9 May 2019, the General Assembly adopted resolution 73/292, in which it decided to convene the 2020 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, in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June 2020. The overarching theme of the Conference is "Scaling up Ocean Action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions".

Guiding questions to frame the discussion:

- What have we learnt from the UN Ocean Conference in 2017 to support action towards implementation of SDG14?
- What are our expectations for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference?
- What would be important in identifying ways to support the effective and timely implementation of SDG14 during the 2020 UN Ocean Conference? What role could COAs and voluntary commitment holders play here?
- Four out of ten targets under SDG14 mature in 2020. What needs to be done to drive implementation by then?
- Member States have decided that the overarching theme of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference will be "Scaling up Ocean Action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions". How could the Conference ensure that resources are devoted where most needed?