



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 II: Experiences in Implementation

A. Lessons from the COAs on Marine and coastal ecosystems management, Mangroves and Coral reefs

Background

Diverse area-based measures and management tools can be used to sustainably manage, protect, conserve and restore marine ecosystems. Over 850 voluntary commitments (VCs) are registered with the Community of Ocean Action (COA) on Marine and coastal ecosystems management. They focus on a variety of the area-based management issues, including the application of ecosystem approaches, marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management and the establishment of marine protected areas. The Co-focal Points of this COA have been trying to provide a platform for dialogue and discussion among the Community members, provide opportunities to share lessons and showcase the progress of the Community's VCs and continue to push for the registration of new VCs, implementation and regular updates on existing VCs.

Mangrove forests, being some of the most productive and biologically diverse ecosystems on the planet, deliver incredible ecosystem services that play a critical role in supporting human well-being through climate regulation, disaster risk reduction, food security, and poverty reduction. However, in the past century, 67% of global mangroves have been lost due to drivers including coastal development, aquaculture, agriculture, and climate change. The importance of mangroves to ocean health is reflected in more than 110 VCs that relate to the restoration, rehabilitation, protection and management of mangroves and associated ecosystems. The COA on Mangroves aims to support its members in implementing their mangrove-related VCs by exchanging progress reports, experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Coral reefs are also one of the most diverse ecosystems on earth. They support fisheries, and an estimated one billion people have some dependence on coral reefs for food and income from fishing and tourism. They also protect shorelines and create land by dissipating wave energy and



continue to be a potential source of new medicines. However, coral reefs are threatened by a combination of impacts that include ocean warming and acidification, local pollution, overfishing and sedimentation. Over 130 VCs, covering both local and global initiatives, are related to coral reefs, including activities aimed at their protection, management and restoration, as well as maintaining tangible benefits to coastal communities from coral reef fisheries and tourism. The Co-focal Points of the COA on Coral reefs aim to support progress and reporting on VCs related to coral reefs that are registered as contributions to the implementation of SDG14.

Guiding questions to frame the discussion:

- What are the good practices and lessons learned in the delivery of the VCs related to marine and coastal ecosystems management, mangroves and coral reefs, respectively?
- Where do you see outstanding gaps in the coverage of existing VCs in these COAs?
- What steps should be taken to accelerate the progress in the implementation of VCs the COAs on Marine and coastal ecosystems management, Mangroves and Coral reefs?
- How can the COAs on Marine and coastal ecosystems management, Mangroves and Coral reefs develop and implement an effective strategy to catalyze and generate additional VCs in the lead up to the 2020 UN Ocean Conference?
- On the basis of progress updates in the implementation of VCs, as well as mid-term evaluations prepared by these three COAs, what approaches can be suggested to enhance cooperation and seek synergies among the activities relating to the COAs on marine and coastal ecosystems management, mangroves and coral reefs?