



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

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

30–31 May 2019
Incheon, Republic of Korea

Background Note

Session VI: Experiences in Implementation (Contd.)

C. Lessons from COAs on Sustainable Fisheries and Implementation of international law as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Background

COA on Sustainable Fisheries

Marine and coastal ecosystems are critical to the livelihoods and nutritional needs of communities in developing countries. More than 3 billion people rely on fish for animal protein, and some 300 million people find their livelihoods in marine fisheries—90 percent of those in small-scale, artisanal fisheries. Overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and destructive fishing practices threaten fish stocks. Climate change – rising ocean temperatures and ocean acidification – is altering ocean ecosystems with implications for the distribution and the productivity of marine species. These challenges test our ability to sustainably manage capture fisheries and aquaculture.

In recognition of these challenges, sustainable management of fisheries was one of the most common activities registered in the voluntary commitments (VCs), with more than 500 commitments prioritizing fisheries.

COA on Implementation of international law as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

As target 14.c recognizes, the realization of the commitments in Goal 14 requires the implementation of international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Implementation of the applicable legal framework for oceans and seas will directly contribute to the realization of each of the targets under SDG 14, across multiple sectors,



particularly since targets under Goal 14 exhibit close interrelationships and interlinkages with one another and also within each target.

Addressing the anthropogenic pressures on marine ecosystems, such as marine pollution, overexploitation of marine living resources, coastal degradation, climate change and ocean acidification, and their impacts requires effective cross-sectoral coordination and extensive cooperation among States at global, regional and bilateral levels, including through intergovernmental organizations. International law, as reflected in UNCLOS, provides an important basis for such cooperation, and its effective implementation is thus critical to the sustainable development of oceans and their resources. This COA has approximately 300 VCs.

The two Communities of Ocean Action aims to support its members in implementing their VCs by exchanging progress reports, experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Guiding questions to frame the discussion:

- What are the good practices and lessons learned in the delivery of the VCs belonging to these COAs?
- Where do you see outstanding gaps in the coverage of existing VCs belonging to these COAs?
- What should be considered to accelerate the progress in the implementation of VCs by these COAs?
- How can these COAs develop and implement an effective strategy to catalyze and generate additional VCs in the lead up to the 2020 UN Ocean Conference?