

**Contribution of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea,  
Office of Legal Affairs, to the 2015 Global Sustainable Development Report**

1. With reference to the invitation to contribute to the preparation of the 2015 Global Sustainable Development Report, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, wishes to provide the following information for inclusion in the section of the report entitled “Special theme: The oceans-biodiversity-poverty eradication nexus”.
2. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in its preamble, recognizes that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole. The General Assembly, in its annual resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea, has also consistently recognized that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach, and reaffirmed the need to improve cooperation and coordination at the national, regional and global levels, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the Convention”), to support and supplement the efforts of each State in promoting the implementation and observance of the Convention and the integrated management and sustainable development of the oceans and seas (e.g. resolution 68/70, preamble). It has also consistently noted that ecosystem approaches to ocean management should be focused on managing human activities in order to maintain and, where needed, restore ecosystem health to sustain goods and environmental services, provide social and economic benefits for food security, sustain livelihoods in support of international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and conserve marine biodiversity (e.g. resolution 68/70, paragraph 184).
3. The conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources is a critical component of the oceans, biodiversity and poverty eradication nexus, given its importance to food security and livelihoods. In that regard, in the context of its annual resolution on sustainable fisheries, the General Assembly regularly addresses issues such as: measures to achieve sustainable fisheries; the implementation of the legal regime contained in the Convention, the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and related instruments; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; fishing overcapacity; and responsible fishing in the marine environment (e.g. resolution 68/71).
4. A number of the processes established by the General Assembly to assist it in its consideration of ocean affairs and the law of the sea are addressing, in a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary manner, issues related to oceans and sustainable development, including linkages between oceans, biodiversity and poverty eradication.
5. In particular, the first cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, will be concluded this year. The output of the first cycle, the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (“World Ocean Assessment”), is under preparation and a summary thereof will be considered by the General Assembly at its seventieth session. The first World Ocean Assessment is expected to provide an overall assessment of the scale of human impact on the oceans and the overall value of the oceans to humans; the main threats to the marine environment and human economic and social well-being; the needs for capacity-building and effective approaches to meeting such needs; and the most serious gaps in knowledge and possible ways of filling them. The outline of the assessment includes: major ecosystem services from the marine environment; cross-cutting issues: food security and food safety;

other human activities and the marine environment; and marine biological diversity and habitats (see A/69/77, Annex II).

6. In addition, since its inception pursuant to resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999 based on decision 7/1 of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (“Informal Consultative Process”) has emphasized the importance of the oceans and seas for providing vital resources for food security and for sustaining economic prosperity and the well-being of present and future generations. The General Assembly has recognized the role of the Informal Consultative Process as a unique forum for comprehensive discussions on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea, consistent with the framework provided by the Convention and Chapter 17 of Agenda 21. It has also recognized that the perspective of the three pillars of sustainable development should be further enhanced in the examination of the selected topics (e.g. resolution 68/70, paragraph 266). The Assembly has further recognized the primary role of the Informal Consultative Process in integrating knowledge, the exchange of opinions among multiple stakeholders and coordination among competent agencies, and enhancing awareness of topics, including emerging issues, while promoting the three pillars of sustainable development (e.g. resolution 68/70, paragraph 268).

7. The summaries of discussions and other outcomes of the fifteen meetings of the Informal Consultative Process held to date on a number of topics related to oceans and sustainable development are available on the website of the Division at [http://www.un.org/depts/los/consultative\\_process/consultative\\_process.htm](http://www.un.org/depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm).

8. In particular, at its twelfth meeting in 2011, the Informal Consultative Process focused on “contributing to the assessment, in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, of progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges” (A/66/186).

9. Most recently, at its fifteenth meeting, held from 27 to 30 May 2014, the Informal Consultative Process focused its discussions on “the role of seafood in global food security” (A/69/90). A report of the Secretary-General, which addressed the topic of focus, informed the meeting (A/69/71). During the meeting, a discussion panel addressed the themes of “understanding global food security and the current role of seafood therein”; “the role of seafood in global food security in the context of the three pillars of sustainable development” and “opportunities and challenges for the future role of seafood in global food security”. At the meeting, inter alia, delegations underscored the important contribution of seafood to global food security and its relevance to the three pillars of sustainable development. They underlined that seafood played a significant but not yet fully recognized role in food security and the need to better integrate seafood into wider policy discussions on global food security was emphasized. The importance of seafood as a means to improve food security and nutrition, particularly in developing countries where it was often the sole source of critical proteins, was highlighted by delegations. Delegations also drew attention to the role of the seafood sector as a critical source of livelihood and income.

10. The sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, which will be held from 6 to 10 April 2015 will focus its discussions on “oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic”. It is therefore expected that consideration will continue to be given to, inter alia, the nexus between oceans, biodiversity and poverty eradication in that context.

11. Finally, the annual reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, which provide comprehensive information on developments in ocean affairs and the law of the sea, have consistently included sections on oceans and sustainable development, touching upon the linkages between oceans and their resources and the three pillars of sustainable development.