



The Ocean Conference - Side Event

Regional cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific and support the achievement of SDG 14

Concept Note (as of 29 May 2017)

Background

The General Assembly, in resolution 70/226, decided to convene the high-level 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 Conference will be convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 5 to 9 June 2017, coinciding with World Oceans Day, observed annually on 8 June. The overarching theme of the Conference will be “Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14”.

Oceans and fisheries are an important source for livelihoods, employment, nutrition and opportunities for economic growth in Asia and the Pacific. Oceans in the Asia and Pacific region cover approximately 40% of the earth’s surface.¹ The Pacific Islands small island developing states supply one-third of the world’s tuna with a first-sale value of over \$4 billion; coral reef-related fisheries in Indonesia and the Philippines alone are valued at around \$2.2 billion per year and reef-based tourism is valued at another \$258 million annually². Yet marine ecosystems are increasingly under threat due to climate change, ocean pollution and unregulated fishing. About 60 per cent of coral reefs in the region are at risk. The damage on ecosystems undermines the enterprises and livelihoods that depend on ocean resources and increase the risk of coastal communities to disasters. An estimated 60 per cent of mangrove forests, which constitute the first level of defence against coastal hazards, have been cleared. Studies show that areas with degraded mangrove forests are more vulnerable to hazards and have more difficulty bouncing back from disasters. Increasing economic returns and ensuring the sustainable management of fisheries, as well as strengthening maritime surveillance and enforcement, have been identified as priorities for the region.

ESCAP member countries at its 72nd session in May 2016 adopted resolution E/ESCAP/RES/72/9 which calls for greater cooperation, collaboration and coordination between sub-regions and regional organizations of Asia and the Pacific and through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation for promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14 and requests ESCAP to undertake an assessment of capacity development needs of the countries in Asia and the Pacific for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in collaboration with United Nations specialized agencies and

¹ The World Fact book 2017, Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2017. Available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

² World Bank, 2014, Oceans: Sector Results Profile, Available from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2013/04/13/oceans-results-profile>



international, regional and sub-regional organizations. Responding to this resolution, ESCAP in collaboration with the broader UN system and the Regional Coordination Mechanism is convening a ‘task team’ to develop a first outline of the assessment. The task team will work under the framework of the Thematic Working Group on Resource Efficient Growth (TWGREG) which has already discussed the need to support the development of the regional assessment.

Furthermore, the Pacific leaders, at the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting held from 15-17 March for the UN Oceans Conference agreed to: (i) improve oceans governance across all maritime zones with the goal of full implementation by 2030; (ii) implement actions for a Cleaner Pacific at all levels including calling for actions to reduce plastics and other forms of pollution by 2025; (iii) call for action on nuclear waste, radioactive and other contaminants, shipwrecks and World War II relics; (iv) call for global observing system for ocean acidification and ocean health; (v) explore feasibility of mechanisms for blue carbon and other potential benefits to be derived from healthy oceans; (vi) mobilize new resources and target existing ones to deliver integrated ocean management commitments; (vii) investment in data and information systems; (viii) call for triennial UN Ocean Conferences; (ix) resolve maritime boundary issues; and (x) emphasize the links between SDGs 14 and SDG 13 and SDG 17 calling for all countries to fully implement their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

These recommendations were also presented to the fourth session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development held from 29-31 March in Bangkok. The APFSD took a close look at the cluster of sustainable development goals that will be the focus of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development in line with GA resolution on follow up and review (A/70/299). The in-depth review of goals included SDG 14³. The discussions were chaired by the Minister for Fisheries from Fiji who is also a lead organizer of the proposed side event.

Lead Organizers: ESCAP, Fiji and Bangladesh.

Co-Organizers and Sponsors: ESCAP Pacific Office (EPO), UNESCO (tbc).

Objective of the Side Event: The side event has three objectives: i) to identify critical areas of regional and sub-regional cooperation for the implementation of SDG 14; ii) to present the preliminary outline of the assessment and seek inputs with a view to strengthening it; and iii) to establish or strengthen partnerships amongst regional and global partners to support implementation of resolution E/ESCAP/RES/72/9 and SDG 14.

³ Reports of the roundtables on the SDG [http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/EESCAPFSD\(4\)CRP1.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/EESCAPFSD(4)CRP1.pdf)



Date and time: 5 June 2017: 1815-1930

Draft Programme	
Panel discussion <i>Regional cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific and achieve SDG 14</i>	
Introduction Representative from ESCAP	10 mins
Key note Presentation Presentation by Scientist	20 mins
Panel discussion with ministers and stakeholders of selected countries from Asia and the Pacific Discussion on challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation to achieve SDG 14 and its targets regionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the key drivers, including related to regional cooperation, for achieving SDG 14? b. How can policy coherence be strengthened to address the targets included in SDG 14? c. How can scientific knowledge and research help address systemic challenges that hinder the sustainable use of oceans and seas? Discussion of the preliminary outline of the assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the key elements that should be included in an assessment of capacity development needs in Asia and the Pacific to support implementation of ESCAP resolution E/ESCAP/RES/72/9 and strengthen implementation of SDG 14? 	50 mins
Final wrap up by moderator	10 mins

Panel	
Moderator	Representative from ESCAP
Keynote speaker	Ms. Elizabeth Holland, Professor, University of the South Pacific
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mr. Semi Koroilavesau, Minister of Fisheries, Fiji 2) Mr. Khurshed Alam, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh 3) Mr. Komang Astika, Pemuteran Bay Coral Protection Foundation, Indonesia. 4) Mr. Colin Tukuitonga, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community 5) UNESCO representative (TBC)