



# Follow-up to The Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

## Draft for consultation

### INTRODUCTION

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 Ocean Conference - took place on 5-9 June 2017 at United Nations Headquarters, with attendance of Heads of State and Government, other high-level representatives from Governments, the United Nations system, Intergovernmental Organizations, as well as the full participation of civil society, the scientific community, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders.

The Ocean Conference resulted in an intergovernmentally agreed political declaration "*Our ocean, our future: call for action*", the co-chairs' summaries of seven partnership dialogues, and a list of 1,380 voluntary commitments from Governments, the UN system, IGOs, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and other actors - individually or in partnership – to advance the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, covering all areas of SDG 14 targets.

### FOLLOW-UP TO VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

At the Conference, many member States and stakeholders stressed that effective follow-up to The Ocean Conference will be critical to ensuring that all nations are working together to meet their Goal 14 implementation obligations, inclusive of science, business and civil society.

In the declaration "*Our ocean, our future: call for action*", member States agreed on the follow-up to the Conference, including:

- "*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))

The July session of the HLPF will provide the first opportunity to consider the outcomes of the Conference, including the voluntary commitments. The present paper contains a number of specific proposals for follow-up to the voluntary commitments from The Ocean Conference.

#### 1. Registry of Voluntary Commitments

To support the process of collecting voluntary commitments for the Conference, *The Ocean Conference Registry of Voluntary Commitments* was developed in the lead up to the Conference - an open online platform for use by all member States and stakeholders to register their voluntary commitments geared at driving the implementation of Goal 14 and its associated targets.

*The Ocean Conference Registry of Commitments* will remain open after the Conference, with all the details of voluntary commitments publicly accessible, and allowing new commitments for the implementation of Goal 14 to be registered by all stakeholders.

The Ocean Conference Registry of Commitments could be further developed, allowing stakeholders to voluntarily report on the progress of their commitments, to visualize linkages of SDG 14 with other SDGs and associated targets, include space for sharing best practices, and include a dedicated mailing list of focal points for sharing information. All data and voluntary reports should remain publicly accessible to ensure there is a transparent basis for systematic assessments of voluntary commitments by third parties.

A message could be sent to all focal points of the voluntary commitments on a biannual or quarterly basis, providing a link to a simple reporting mechanism.

## **2. Informal report on partnerships and voluntary commitments**

Each year since the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, the Secretariat has produced an annual informal report to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) on the impact of partnerships and voluntary commitments on advancing the SDGs. A similar report is planned for 2017, with focus on partnerships and voluntary commitments around the 6 SDGs under in-depth review at the HLPF session, which also includes SDG14. A section of the report will also focus on voluntary commitments made in connection with The Ocean Conference, and include a more in-depth analysis of all commitments. The analysis could also be submitted as an input to the Global Sustainable Development Report.

The report of the Secretary-General on the *“Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development”*, to be submitted to the 72nd session of the General Assembly, will include a section on the role of partnerships and the Major Groups and other stakeholders’ contribution to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This section would also include voluntary commitments stemming from The Ocean Conference.

## **3. Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework**

As a direct follow-up to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the 70th session of General Assembly decided to establish, through resolution 70/202, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Partnership Framework, to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for SIDS, and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of SIDS.

The SIDS Partnership Framework is guided by an intergovernmental Steering Committee, a reporting process of SIDS partnerships and commitments through an online platform, and regular meetings to review and share experiences for partnerships and pledges devoted to the sustainable of SIDS. The Framework is supported in the Secretariat by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS). The Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) on SIDS - an informal consultative mechanism at the working level of SIDS focal points of relevant UN agencies as well as international and regional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) - provides regular updates on SIDS partnerships to the process.

Out of all the 615 voluntary commitments from Governments during the process of the Ocean Conference, 176 were made by SIDS. In addition, SIDS are beneficiaries of many voluntary commitments. The SIDS Partnership Framework could be a platform to promote the voluntary commitments from The Ocean Conference that are relevant to SIDS and help their implementation, including on finding potential partners.

## **4. Partnership Exchange**

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the central platform at the United Nations for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

In support of the work of the HLPF, UN DESA, as its Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), organizes annually a *Partnership Exchange* special event on the margins of HLPF to review the impact partnerships and voluntary commitments have in advancing the SDGs.

The Partnership Exchange focuses on reviewing partnerships and voluntary commitments clustered around the SDGs under in-depth review at HLPF each year. The 2017 Partnership Exchange will include a dedicated session to reviewing partnerships and voluntary commitments for Goal 14, which would also include voluntary commitments stemming from the Ocean Conference. As the voluntary commitments from the Ocean Conference are often interlinked with other SDGs,

subsequent sessions of the Partnership Exchange event can look at how the Conference voluntary commitments intrinsically contribute to the implementation of those SDGs under review at HLPF.

#### **5. UN-Oceans**

UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system, in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the respective competences of each of its participating organizations and the mandates and priorities approved by their respective governing bodies.

UN-Oceans could contribute to the follow-up of voluntary commitments stemming from the UN System, improve coherence and coordination in their implementation, and as well provide inputs to HLPF and the annual report on partnerships and voluntary commitments prepared by the Secretariat.

#### **6. Ocean Action Hub**

The Ocean Action Hub, developed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), could continue to serve as a vehicle to facilitate stakeholder engagement and outreach on the implementation of Goal 14, including from the voluntary commitments in particular at the country level.

#### **7. Side events**

Consideration could be given to organize various side events on the follow-up to the voluntary commitments of the Ocean Conference during several relevant UN processes, including:

- General Assembly Second Committee
- 2017 UN Climate Change Conference/United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 23 (16-17 November 2017, Bonn)
- Our Ocean Conference (5-7 October 2017, Malta)
- UNEA (December 2017)

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