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

<u>Background Note</u>

Session VII: Experiences in Implementation (Contd.)
D. Lessons from COAs on Marine Pollution and Ocean Acidification

Background

Marine pollution of all kinds, which is addressed by Sustainable Development Goal target 14.1, is one of the areas which received most attention in Ocean Conference voluntary commitments, with over 670 voluntary commitments (VCs) announced. They address measures such as reducing or banning plastic bags, bottles, straws, micro beads in cosmetics, organizing coastal and ocean clean ups, addressing abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear, addressing pollution from shipping, better nutrient management, raising awareness and engaging in scientific research related to marine litter and plastics. The Community of Ocean Action (COA) on Marine pollution aims to support its members in implementing their marine pollution-related VCs by exchanging progress reports, experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Ocean acidity has increased by roughly 26% since pre-industrial times because of increased releases of $CO2$ due to the burning of fossil fuels and other human activities. Ocean acidification is detrimental to many marine species, such as corals and other species with calcium carbonate skeletons or shells, with impacts on their physiology and long-term fitness. These impacts, in combination with increases in upper-ocean temperature, stratification and de-oxygenation of sub-surface waters can affect processes fundamental to the overall structure and functioning of marine ecosystems with far-reaching consequences and potentially profound socio-economic impacts. More than 250 VCs are registered with this COA.

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?