

Statement on behalf of Ocean Care

Thank you Chair. This statement is delivered by OceanCare and 24 other NGOs who share concern that ocean noise pollution, generated by a variety of human activities, is a significant threat to marine ecosystems, marine animals and the future sustainability of our oceans.

Firstly we would like to highlight that we welcome that ocean noise has been chosen as the focus of the 19th meeting of the UN's Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea next year.

Next, we wish to outline the following summarised recommendations related to Ocean Noise - the more detailed statement is available from OceanCare on our website.

- Ocean noise must be addressed as a serious marine pollution issue under SDG14.1 which seeks to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds.
- The detrimental effects of ocean noise on fish, and therefore fisheries, undermines global efforts to restore fish stocks and therefore requires the increased involvement of specialist UN agencies such as the FAO and RFMOs
- We urge governments to establish indicators and targets for ocean noise management, supported by national and regional noise registers and monitoring programmes, following the example set by the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
- Robust, comprehensive and transparent environmental impact assessments must be incorporated into domestic ocean noise management measures
- We welcome the development of an international legally binding BBNJ instrument under UNCLOS which we believe should incorporate measures to manage underwater noise pollution.
- The introduction of noise into protected and sensitive areas must be controlled. High risk activities (including, seismic surveys for oil and gas, extraction and military training) and the noise they generate should be prohibited from operating in, and propagating noise into, sensitive habitats.
- We urge commitments from governments towards implementing existing policy measures that contribute towards the reduction and management of ocean noise.
- In the case of the IMO's Guidelines for the Reduction of Underwater Noise from Commercial Shipping we urge industry to implement these in ship design and repair, and for governments to quickly turn these voluntary guidelines into legally binding measures.
- Finally, but critically, we call for the support of the UN General Assembly and all relevant organisations, agreements and nations to work towards the development of a global strategy that would seek to reverse the trend of rising ocean noise levels globally