

Blue Economy, Abu Dhabi Declaration

We, the participating Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives, having met in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 19 to 20 January 2014, held as part of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week and in preparation for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Apia, Samoa in September 2014, with the participation of civil society, discussed how to utilise and implement the Blue Economy as a tool to enable the transition of development models for island and coastal States towards sustainable development.

Noting that the Blue Economy, founded in line with the concept and principles of, and mutually supportive with the Green Economy, is a tool that offers specific mechanisms for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and coastal countries to address their sustainable development challenges.

Recognising the significant contribution that the Blue Economy can make towards the alleviation of hunger, poverty eradication, creation of sustainable livelihoods and mitigation of climate change.

Cognisant of the fundamental importance of the marine environment and its resources to future, inclusive sustainable development – *inter alia*:

- Fisheries and their vital role in providing food security and sustainable livelihoods,
- Tourism as a source of decent employment and a contributor to poverty alleviation,
- As a source of renewable energy from wind, wave, tidal, thermal and biomass sources.
- As a source of hydrocarbon and mineral resources.
- As the primary medium of global trade through shipping and port facilities.

Aware and greatly concerned that the oceans of the world are threatened and being seriously degraded by unsustainable exploitation, pollution, habitat destruction and acidification and being determined to address these threats.

Welcoming the report of the Regional Preparatory Meeting of Small Island Developing States of the Atlantic Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas held in Seychelles from 17-19 July 2013.

Welcoming the report of the Nairobi Convention Regional Workshop on: Contributions of Natural Blue Capital to a Green Economy, held in Seychelles 11-13 December 2013.

Recognising that States should take efforts to enhance management mechanisms that minimise and mitigate unsustainable exploitation of marine resources.

Recognising that for many States transition to a Blue Economy will entail a fundamental, systemic change in policy, legal and governance frameworks.

Noting that enabling mechanisms for the Blue Economy include technology transfer, capacity building, targeted streamlined financing mechanisms, including debt for nature and/or adaptation swaps, and modes of science-based implementation.

Recalling that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, June 2012, recognised the need for significant mobilisation of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing, in order to give strong support to developing countries in their efforts to promote sustainable development.

Notes that the Blue Economy offers significant applications and benefits by offering a framework to protect and enhance the value of marine and coastal systems through an integrated approach.

Stresses the importance of enhanced mechanisms for governance of the high seas.

Reaffirms the integral importance of cooperation, both national and international, including civil society organisations and their further empowerment in the sustainable development of our seas and oceans.

Underscores that the Blue Economy is founded upon research, assessment and data sharing, and that the assessment and valuation of the blue capital will require diverse and strong scientific and technical capacities.

Urges the further development of an integrated ecosystem approach to the maintenance of balanced, healthy and productive marine ecosystems, including the valuation of blue capital and potential applications of “blue carbon” trading.

Urges States, international agencies and donors to develop means to support and facilitate the implementation of the Blue Economy in developing countries.

Calls for prompt action in the further development of the Blue Economy concept that, drawing from and building upon existing initiatives, mainstreams and enables the Blue Economy concept as a distinct tool on the international sustainable development agenda.

Express our appreciation to the government of the United Arab Emirates for its hosting of this Summit.