
ADVANCE AND UNEDITED REPORTING MATERIAL

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Oceans and the law of the sea

Oceans and the law of the sea

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, which covers the period from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022, is submitted pursuant to paragraph 371 of General Assembly resolution 76/72. It is also being submitted to States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, pursuant to article 319 of the Convention. The present report provides information on major developments relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, in particular, at the United Nations and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as within the bodies established by the Convention.

* [A/77/150](#).

** The present report contains a summary of the most significant and recent developments from contributions by relevant agencies, programmes and bodies. Owing to word count limits for reports mandated by the General Assembly, an advance, unedited version of the report, with comprehensive footnotes, is available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea at: www.un.org/depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm.

I. Introduction

1. The ocean provides more than half the oxygen needed for life on the planet, the main source of food for over a billion people and employment for almost 40 million individuals, yet it remains under constant threat from human activities.
2. Approximately eight million tons of plastic waste enter the ocean every year, disrupting marine life and threatening coastal communities, in particular in small island developing States (SIDS) that depend heavily on fishing and tourism. Plastic pollution has reached the deepest ocean trenches. Nearly 80 per cent of wastewater is discharged into the ocean and seas without treatment and coastal dead zones are growing. Fish stocks are harvested at unsustainable levels, coral reefs are bleaching and dying, and marine ecosystems are degrading.¹
3. Climate change also continues to impact the ocean, as sea level rise, ocean heat and ocean acidification broke new records in 2021.²
4. Building upon the outcomes of significant ocean-related meetings in 2022, including the 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 (2022 Ocean Conference) and the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference) collective action is urgently needed to address threats to the ocean and restore its health for prosperity in order to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), including Sustainable Development Goal 14, Life Below Water (Goal 14), and its ten targets.
5. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (UN Decade of Ocean Science), covering the period 2021–2030, provides an important opportunity to improve ocean health by increasing understanding and providing scientific support for policies and innovations that enhance the sustainable development of the ocean.
6. The legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas is well-established in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Convention),³ the world's "constitution for the oceans",⁴ with this year marking the fortieth anniversary of its adoption.
7. The present report highlights key activities and developments relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including those undertaken by the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/72.⁵ It should be read together with other reports relevant to oceans and

¹ United Nations, Secretary-General's remarks on the occasion of World Oceans Day, 8 June 2022, available at: www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-06-08/secretary-generals-message-world-oceans-day-scroll-down-for-french-version and United Nations, Secretary-General's opening remarks to the United Nations Ocean Conference, 27 June 2022, available at: www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-06-27/un-secretary-generals-opening-remarks-united-nations-ocean-conference-delivered.

² *State of the Global Climate 2021*, WMO-No. 1290, World Meteorological Organization, 2022.

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, p. 3.

⁴ United Nations, "A Constitution for the Oceans", remarks by Tommy T.B. Koh, of Singapore, President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, available at: https://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/koh_english.pdf.

⁵ Due to word count restrictions on reports of the Secretary-General and the scope of developments in the field of oceans and the law of the sea, the present report does not purport to be comprehensive, but to provide an illustrative and thematic overview of major developments.

the law of the sea issued by the United Nations during the period under review,⁶ as well as the detailed contributions provided by the United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and bodies, and other intergovernmental organizations.⁷

II. Impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on oceans issues

8. During the reporting period, ocean-related activities gradually resumed following the COVID-19-related disruptions of the past two years. Considerable

⁶ These include: (a) report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/77/68), which addressed the topic of focus of the twenty-second meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea; (b) report of the Secretary-General on actions taken by States and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements in response to paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of General Assembly resolution 64/72, paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of General Assembly resolution 66/68 and paragraphs 156, 171, 175, 177 to 188 and 219 of General Assembly resolution 71/123 on sustainable fisheries, addressing the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks (A/77/155); (c) report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its twenty-second meeting (A/77/119); (d) report of the thirty-second meeting of the Meetings of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (SPLOS/32/15); (e) report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects at its fifteenth meeting (A/76/391) and its sixteenth meeting (A/77/327); (f) reports of the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction at its fourth session (A/CONF.232/2022/4) and its fifth session (A/CONF.232/2022/9) and (g) other relevant documents, such as the statements by the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission (CLCS/53/1, CLCS/54/2 and CLCS/55/2).

⁷ Inputs have been received from the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), INTERPOL, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), International Seabed Authority (ISA), International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), International Whaling Commission (IWC), Joint Technical Commission of the Maritime Front (Comisión Técnica Mixta del Frente Marítimo - CTMFM), North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), OSPAR Commission, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur - CPPS), Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and World Meteorological Organization (WMO). All contributions are available at: www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/contributions77.htm.

efforts were aimed at ensuring the sustainable, inclusive and environmentally resilient recovery of key sectors of the ocean-based economy, with particular emphasis on SIDS and those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.⁸ Despite the recovery of some sectors, the pandemic continued to impact the ocean-based economy, as well as individuals and communities who rely on the ocean and its resources.

9. Precarious conditions and inequalities suffered by seafarers and fishers were exacerbated by the pandemic as they faced challenges in relation to their health, safety and well-being, including the ability to join vessels and be repatriated. Seafarers faced insufficient access to medical care, vaccines and shore leave, as well as unprecedented cases of abandonment, prompting continuing calls to designate seafarers as “key workers”.⁹

10. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to compound social challenges and exacerbate inequalities. Informal workers, migrants and women in the fishing industry were often excluded from government pandemic-relief programs and with limited access to health care, social security coverage or paid sick leave.¹⁰ Decimation of jobs and opportunities increased poverty and slowed progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.¹¹

11. Global fisheries and aquaculture were affected by a decline in demand and production, reduction of income and disruption in monitoring, control and surveillance.¹² Mitigation and adaption to the pandemic were largely determined by industry resilience and national capabilities,¹³ including through enhanced use of digital tools and diversification of supply sources and markets.¹⁴ Ongoing capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives provided an opportunity to galvanize action to support artisanal and small-scale fisheries, including in the context of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture.¹⁵

⁸ ECLAC and UNCTAD contributions; UNCTAD, *Review of Maritime Transport, 2021* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.21.II.D.21); UNCTAD, *Impact and implications of COVID-19 for the ocean economy and trade strategy: Case studies from Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica* (2022); FAO, *The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022* (Rome, 2022); Outcome of the 2022 Ocean Conference, “*Our ocean, our future, our responsibility*”, A/CONF.230/2022/12, Annex, para. 9, now available as General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, *Our ocean, our future, our responsibility*. See also, Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), convened under the auspices of the Council, on the theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, E/HLS/2022/1, para. 55.

⁹ ILO and IMO contributions. Also see ILO Brief “Rough seas: The impact of COVID-19 on fishing workers in South-East Asia”, April 2022, available at: www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public; IMO resolution, A.1160(32), Comprehensive action to address seafarers’ challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic; ILO, IMO, UNCTAD, WHO Joint statement urging continued collaboration to address the crew change crisis, safeguard seafarer health and safety, and avoid supply chain disruptions during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, 28 February 2022, available at: www.wcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/Documents; UNCTAD 2021, footnote 8; IMO Press Release, “Seafarer journeys in spotlight for Day of the Seafarer 2022”, 24 June 2022, available at: www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings; General Assembly resolution 76/72, para. 129.

¹⁰ FAO, ILO, UNCTAD and UNEP contributions. Also see UNEP and Gender and Water Alliance, *Gender Mainstreaming in Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management: Principles, Case Studies and Lessons Learned* (UNEP, 2022); FAO 2022, footnote 8; ILO Brief, footnote 9; UNCTAD 2022, footnote 8.

¹¹ ECLAC (p. 2), ILO (part IV) and UNCTAD (p. 11) contributions.

¹² FAO and ILO contributions. Also see, FAO 2022, footnote 8; ILO Brief, footnote 9.

¹³ FAO 2022, footnote 8; ILO Brief, footnote 9.

¹⁴ FAO 2022, footnote 8; ASCOBANS and NEAFC contributions; Also see Grant P. Course, “Monitoring Cetacean Bycatch: An Analysis of Different Methods Aboard Commercial Fishing Vessels”, ASCOBANS Technical Series No. 1, ASCOBANS Secretariat, Bonn (September 2021).

¹⁵ FAO contribution; FAO 2022, footnote 8; See FAO International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022, Global Action Plan available at: www.fao.org/3/cb4875en/cb4875en.pdf.

12. Moderate growth was expected for maritime trade in the 2022-2026 period, albeit subject to pandemic-related uncertainties.¹⁶ While the short-term outlook was favourable, pandemic-accelerated trends, such as decreased reliance on distant foreign suppliers, digitalization, autonomous shipping and decarbonization, could reshape the future shipping landscape.¹⁷

13. Ocean observing activities continued despite interruptions in research vessel operations that impeded deployment and replacement of measuring equipment.¹⁸ Studies on the long-term impacts of the pandemic on ocean science are ongoing.¹⁹

14. Events and capacity-building activities resumed in-person and in hybrid formats,²⁰ many of which were tailored to create better response measures to counter the impacts of the pandemic.²¹

III. Legal and policy framework

15. Ocean-related meetings held this year, as well as during events commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, witnessed renewed calls for universal participation in the Convention and its implementing agreements.²²

16. As of 31 August 2022, the number of parties to the Convention and to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (Part XI Agreement) remained at 168 and 151, respectively. The number of parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks increased from 91 to 92, following the accession of Togo on 11 May 2022.

17. Further progress on the development of the legal framework for the oceans and seas was made at the fourth session of the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference, held from 7 to 18 March 2022.²³ A fifth session, convened from 15 to 26 August 2022 and guided by a further revised draft text of an agreement prepared by the President of the Conference, made substantial progress towards the finalization of the text of an agreement related to marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. Owing to lack of time, the session was suspended at the close of the allotted two-week period and is to be resumed at a date to be determined.²⁴

18. Following resumption of the in-person sessions of the International Seabed Authority (Authority) in December 2021, the Council of the Authority endorsed a

¹⁶ UNCTAD 2021, footnote 8; UNCTAD Press Release, “High freight rates cast a shadow over economic recovery”, UNCTAD/PRESS/PR/2021/040, 18 November 2021, available at: <https://unctad.org/press-material>; UNCTAD, Global Trade Update, February 2022, available at: <https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document>.

¹⁷ UNCTAD 2021, footnote 8; UNCTAD Press Release, “Maritime trade weathers COVID-19 storm but faces far-reaching knock-on effects”, UNCTAD/PRESS/PR/2021/039, 18 November 2021, at: <https://unctad.org/press-material>.

¹⁸ IOC-UNESCO contribution. Also see report of the Secretary-General, A/77/68, para. 29.

¹⁹ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

²⁰ ECLAC, IOC, IOPC Funds, ITLOS, ISA, IWC, NEAFC, SCBD and UNCTAD contributions.

²¹ ECLAC, FAO, ILO, IMO, IOC, SCBD and UNCTAD contributions.

²² See, for example, High-level commemorative meeting to mark the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, available at: www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2022/04/PGA-letter_UNCLOS-40-programme.pdf. Events commemorating the 40th anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of the Convention will culminate with two days of General Assembly plenary meetings on 8 and 9 December 2022.

²³ Report of the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference, fourth session, A/CONF.232/2022/4 available at: www.un.org/bbnj/content/fourth-substantive-session.

²⁴ Report of the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference, fifth session A/CONF.232/2022/9 available at: www.un.org/bbnj/fifth_substantive_session.

roadmap to advance work on the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area.²⁵ A call was made during the thirty-second Meeting of States Parties for a 15-year extension of the two-year deadline to complete the adoption of the rules, regulations and procedures necessary to facilitate the approval of plans of work for exploitation in the Area based on the need, inter alia, to obtain sufficient scientific information to avoid potentially irreversible damage to deep sea ecosystems.²⁶

19. Following its postponement in 2020, the 2022 Ocean Conference was held in Lisbon from 27 June to 1 July 2022, resulting in the adoption of a declaration entitled, “Our ocean, our future, our responsibility”, which affirmed the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the Convention.²⁷ This topic was also the subject of one of the interactive dialogues at the Conference.²⁸

IV. Maritime spaces

20. The bodies established under the Convention, namely the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (Commission), the Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Tribunal), continued their activities contributing to the implementation of the Convention with respect to maritime zones and boundaries, albeit with some limitations due to the pandemic, including postponements and operational adjustments.

21. With the general easing of pandemic-related restrictions, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (Commission) resumed in-person meetings for its fifty-third, fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions.²⁹ Following the decision by the Meeting of States Parties to extend the five-year term of office of the current members of the Commission by one year on an exceptional basis,³⁰ twenty members of the Commission were elected at the thirty-second Meeting of States Parties and will begin their five-year term of office on 16 June 2023.³¹

22. In addition to its work on the draft regulations on exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, the Council of the Authority approved eight applications for the extension of the approved plans of work for exploration for polymetallic nodules and continued work to implement and further develop regional environmental management plans and advance marine scientific research in the Area.³²

23. With regard to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with Part XV of the Convention, consideration of a number of cases was concluded: *The M/T “San Padre Pio” (No. 2) case (Switzerland v. Nigeria)* was discontinued by the Tribunal by agreement of the Parties;³³ the International Court of Justice delivered its judgment in the cases concerning *Maritime Delimitation in the Indian Ocean (Somalia v. Kenya)*

²⁵ ISA contribution (paras. 2, 4 and 6). For further updates on the twenty-seventh session of the Authority, see: <https://isa.org.jm/sessions/27th-session-2022>.

²⁶ Report of the thirty-second Meeting of States Parties, SPLOS/32/15, para. 44. Also see SPLOS/32/14, Annex. A/CONF.230/2022/12, footnote 8, para. 10. Also see generally www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2022.

²⁷ See Concept paper prepared by the Secretariat, A/CONF.230/2022/7. Also see webcast available at: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1e/k1ejvr7e9c> and summary report XX.

²⁸ Statements by the Chair on the progress of work in the Commission: CLCS/53/1, CLCS/54/2, CLCS/55/2.

²⁹ Decision on the extension of the term of office of the current members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, SPLOS/31/10.

³⁰ Report of the thirty-second meeting of the Meetings of States Parties, SPLOS/32/15.

³¹ ISA contribution. For updates on the twenty-seventh session of the Authority, see daily bulletins available at: <https://isa.org.jm/sessions/27th-session-2022>.

³² ITLOS contribution.

and *Alleged Violations of Sovereign Rights and Maritime Spaces in the Caribbean Sea (Nicaragua v. Colombia)*;³⁴ and arbitral proceedings, administered by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, in *The “Enrica Lexie” Incident (Italy v. India)* were closed.³⁵

24. States parties deposited charts and/or lists of geographical coordinates of points concerning baselines and the outer limits of maritime zones.³⁶

V. Importance of the human dimension

25. Cumulative pressures on the ocean and its resources posed direct threats to the people whose lives and livelihoods depend on them, in particular, fishers, seafarers and other workers in ocean sectors and in coastal communities.³⁷ The effects of climate change were a matter of urgent concern, especially in the protection of vulnerable populations in SIDS and least developed countries (LDCs).

Labour at sea

26. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to negatively impact seafarers and fishers,³⁸ International Labour Organisation (ILO) member States committed to a human-centred recovery from the pandemic that was fully inclusive, sustainable and resilient, as well as accelerated implementation of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019).³⁹ States emphasized policies that addressed inequalities and prioritized the creation of decent work for all, including specific measures to promote quality employment and economic development, worker protections, universal social protection and social dialogue.⁴⁰

27. The COVID-19 pandemic also led to a spike in cases of seafarer abandonment, with only 31 of 95 cases being resolved in 2021.⁴¹ The number of reported cases in 2022, as of the date of this report, was already 46.⁴² International Maritime Organization (IMO) member States were called upon to ratify and implement the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) and other relevant international instruments to address these challenges.⁴³ The IMO Legal Committee also endorsed guidelines for port State and flag State authorities on how to address seafarer abandonment cases.⁴⁴

28. An ILO special tripartite committee adopted resolutions relating to COVID-19 vaccinations for seafarers and implementation and practical application of the MLC during the pandemic, as well as eight amendments to the MLC Code to improve the living and working conditions of seafarers, drawing upon lessons learned, including provision of personal protective gear and repatriation of abandoned seafarers.⁴⁵ The committee also adopted resolutions on harassment and bullying, sexual assault and

³⁴ ICJ contribution.

³⁵ PCA contribution.

³⁶ See information concerning deposits made under the Convention at: <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/depositpublicity.htm>.

³⁷ ECLAC (p. 2) and ILO (p. 2) contributions.

³⁸ ILO contribution (p.16).

³⁹ ILO contribution (p.16). Also see General Assembly resolution 73/342, International Labour Organization Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, and A/73/918, annex.

⁴⁰ ILO contribution (p.16).

⁴¹ ILO contribution (p. 8).

⁴² See database on reported incidents of abandonment of seafarers at: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/seafarers/seafarersbrowse.home>

⁴³ IMO contribution (p. 9).

⁴⁴ IMO contribution (p. 9).

⁴⁵ ILO contribution (p. 6). The amendments are expected to enter into force by December 2024.

sexual harassment in the maritime sector, contractual redress for seafarers, and ensuring a greater degree of protection and assistance for abandoned seafarers.⁴⁶

29. An ad hoc inter-agency task force was established by the United Nations Secretary-General's Executive Committee to consider, inter alia, the responsibilities of parties to the MLC relevant to the protection of the rights of seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic and their recognition as key workers.⁴⁷ ILO also established a joint action group on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transport workers and the global supply chain that will identify challenges faced by seafarers and transport workers, identify gaps and raise awareness of existing international guidance and operational protocols and identify countries for specific, coordinated action.⁴⁸ The Joint Maritime Commission of the ILO agreed to raise the minimum basic wage for an able seafarer.⁴⁹

30. Collaboration continued between ILO, IMO and FAO, as well as other specialized agencies, to ensure safety and security of seafarers, fishers and others working in the maritime sectors.⁵⁰ FAO supported small scale fisheries at the global, regional and national level on various matters, including the empowerment of women through capacity development trainings on post-harvest practices as a way to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on small-scale fishing.⁵¹

Gender equality and ocean issues

31. Women continued to constitute a significant proportion of the global fisheries and aquaculture workforces. However, they faced increasing challenges accessing decent work and suffered from discrimination, poor working conditions and limited social protection.⁵² UNEP proposed ten guiding principles for gender mainstreaming in the integrated management of coastal and marine ecosystems, in light of the different impacts of coastal and marine degradation on men and women.⁵³

32. ILO collaborated with the World Food Programme and ACCADEMIS to support resilient communities and empowerment of women through fish processing in Madagascar.⁵⁴ ILO published a strategy report that aimed to increase the visibility of gender inequality within the fishing and seafood processing sectors and reset it through a gender transformative approach.⁵⁵

33. To address the underrepresentation of women in ocean science and facilitate collective action, the International Gender Champions network launched an Impact Group on Research and Oceans for Women.⁵⁶ The Authority conducted a gender mapping exercise of the deep-sea research field in LDCs, landlocked developing

⁴⁶ ILO contribution (p.6).

⁴⁷ ILO contribution (p. 8).

⁴⁸ ILO contribution (pp. 7-8).

⁴⁹ ILO contribution (p. 7). The minimum basic wage for an able seafarer will be raised to US\$658 as of 1 January 2023, US\$666 as of 1 January 2024 and US\$673 as of 1 January 2025.

⁵⁰ IMO contribution (p. 4).

⁵¹ FAO contribution (p. 6).

⁵² ILO contribution (part II. A-B).

⁵³ UNEP contribution (p. 4), referring to UNEP 2022, footnote 10.

⁵⁴ ILO contribution.

⁵⁵ ILO contribution. Also see <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/gender-mainstreaming-coastal-and-marine-ecosystems-management-principles-case>; ILO publication "Ship to Shore Rights South East Asia: Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy Report" available at: www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_847927. The four-year (2020-2024) programme will promote regular and safe labour migration and decent work for migrant workers in the fishing and seafood processing sectors in South East Asia, including by strengthening legal frameworks, protecting labour rights, and empowering workers in the fishing and seafood processing sectors.

⁵⁶ ISA contribution (para. 16).

countries (LLDCs) and SIDS,⁵⁷ as part of the Women in Deep-Sea Research project.⁵⁸ In the shipping sector, IMO designated 18 May as an annual “International Day for Women in Maritime”.⁵⁹

Migration by sea

34. Amidst ongoing restrictions on movement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, refugees and migrants continued to resort to dangerous irregular journeys by sea in search of international protection or a better life, with thousands of individuals dying or being reported missing.⁶⁰ Smuggled migrants risked being trafficked, kidnapped or subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment.⁶¹ In some regions, the absence of an effective search and rescue system resulted in non-response or lengthy delays in disembarkation.⁶²

35. UNHCR continued to offer support to national authorities in the establishment of regular and safe migration pathways, as well as safe disembarkation and implementation of protection-sensitive entry systems for vulnerable people arriving by sea to help prevent refoulement, reduce the use of irregular migration routes at sea and deter the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, including through regional forums such as the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime.⁶³

36. UNHCR repeatedly called for greater search and rescue coordination among States, particularly in the Mediterranean Sea, and for States to provide granular data on refugees and migrants disembarked after rescue at sea, without which targeted programmes remained a challenge.⁶⁴ Several agencies issued a joint statement⁶⁵ that included a call to further develop, in line with international law, the requirement of delivering persons retrieved at sea to a place of safety.⁶⁶

37. UNODC launched a project on strengthening transregional action and responses against the smuggling of migrants to counter migrant smuggling and protect the rights of migrants across multiple migration routes.⁶⁷ UNODC also worked with Bangladesh through the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants in respect of the Andaman Sea.⁶⁸

⁵⁷ ISA contribution (para. 16). See ISA publication, “Empowering women from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in deep-sea research” 2022, available at: <https://isa.org.jm/files/2022-06>.

⁵⁸ See ISA Women in Deep-Sea Research project at: www.isa.org.jm/vc/enhancing-role-women-msr.

⁵⁹ IMO contribution (p. 10).

⁶⁰ UNHCR contribution.

⁶¹ UNHCR contribution (paras. 1, 40).

⁶² See UNHCR contribution (paras. 5, 16, 23 and 42) for further details and statistics on regional migration by sea. Also see DPPA contribution; OHCHR, “Lethal Disregard: Search and rescue and the protection of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea”, 2021, available at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration; and European Commission, “A renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025)”, 2021, available at: <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu>.

⁶³ UNHCR contribution (paras. 5, 42).

⁶⁴ UNHCR contribution (paras. 8, 20).

⁶⁵ IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants available at: www.unhcr.org/publications/brochures. The joint statement encourages States to consider the need to develop the requirement to deliver the persons retrieved at sea to a place of safety, building on IMO Guidelines on the Treatment of Persons Rescued at Sea, annexed to IMO document, MSC Res. 167(78).

⁶⁶ UNHCR (p. 3) and UNODC (p. 4) contributions. Also see: www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/brochures/62824f564/joint-statement-on-place-of-safety.html

⁶⁷ UNODC contribution (p. 4).

⁶⁸ UNODC contribution (p. 4). Also see: www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/glo-act3/overview.html.

38. International cooperation on migration included the first International Migration Review Forum at United Nations Headquarters in New York in May 2022⁶⁹ to review progress in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.⁷⁰ The forum concluded with the adoption of a progress declaration, which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly, that aimed, inter alia, to develop safe and predictable arrival procedures for all migrants, promote responsibility-sharing in providing a place of safety in accordance with international law and develop search and rescue procedures with the primary objective of protecting the right to life.⁷¹

VI. Maritime safety and security

39. In addressing challenges faced by seafarers from the COVID-19 pandemic,⁷² efforts were taken to improve living and working conditions based on lessons learned.⁷³ IMO adopted comprehensive action, including by consolidating issues related to crew change, access to medical care, "key worker" designation and the prioritization of seafarers for COVID-19 vaccination.⁷⁴

40. IMO Council held an extraordinary session to consider the impacts on shipping and seafarers in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, at which IMO committees were requested to enhance efforts to support affected seafarers and commercial ships and to consider implications for the implementation of IMO instruments.⁷⁵ The IMO Maritime Safety Committee urged the IMO Secretariat to continue efforts on the establishment of safe maritime corridors and the safe evacuation of seafarers from the affected area.⁷⁶ Actions to facilitate the evacuation of seafarers from the war zone area were also adopted.⁷⁷

41. Following its regulatory scoping exercise,⁷⁸ the IMO Maritime Safety Committee continued work on a regulatory framework for maritime autonomous surface ships (MASS). It agreed to develop a goal-based instrument to regulate the operation of MASS with a target completion date of 2025 and approved a roadmap for developing a goal-based code for MASS.⁷⁹

42. IMO continued to develop further mandatory provisions and non-mandatory guidelines for ships operating in Arctic and Antarctic waters, including consideration of application of the Polar Code to ships that were not covered by the SOLAS

⁶⁹ See International Migration Review Forum 2022, Background information, available at: www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/imrf-background-note.pdf.

⁷⁰ General Assembly resolution 73/195, annex, Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

⁷¹ General Assembly resolution 76/266, annex, Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum.

⁷² UNCTAD contribution.

⁷³ ILO contribution.

⁷⁴ IMO contribution. Also see, IMO resolution, A.1160(32), footnote 9.

⁷⁵ IMO contribution.

⁷⁶ IMO contribution.

⁷⁷ IMO contribution.

⁷⁸ The following instruments were identified as high priority: International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS); Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG); International Convention on Load Lines (Load Lines); International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers and International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW, STCW-F); International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR); International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships (Tonnage); International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC); and the Special Trade Passenger Ships Agreement and the Protocol on Space Requirements for Special Trade Passenger Ships (STP, SPACE STP).

⁷⁹ IMO contribution.

Convention.⁸⁰ IMO Maritime Safety Committee also adopted amendments to the SOLAS Convention to modernize the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System and improve radiocommunication in polar waters.⁸¹

43. Work continued on prevention of fraudulent registration and registries of ships, with the IMO Assembly encouraging IMO member States to review national laws relating to the prevention and suppression of all forms of maritime fraud and urging governments to take cooperative measures to combat maritime fraud, including by exchanging information and reporting names of ships and registries involved in fraudulent acts.⁸²

44. WMO continued to collaborate with IMO and IHO on coordinated and standardized meteorological and oceanographic information, forecasts and warning services for safety at sea.⁸³ IHO supported the creation and maintenance of interoperable maritime data product specifications.⁸⁴ IWC focussed on collaborative ways to minimise ship strikes and developing a ship strike database.⁸⁵ PIF began work to revive the role of traditional knowledge to inform work on oceans, including maritime safety, and to establish a regional expert working group on cultural and traditional knowledge.⁸⁶ UNODC continued to provide guidance to create a framework for submarine cables protection and resilience in the eastern Indian Ocean.⁸⁷ It also provided technical assistance in Yemen on port security, including safeguarding of internet cables and coast guard response to disruption of global maritime trade routes.

45. Ongoing efforts continued to address a wide range of crimes at sea, including piracy and armed robbery against ships; migrant, drug and weapons smuggling, including nuclear materials and firearms;⁸⁸ human trafficking;⁸⁹ illegal traffic in hazardous wastes and other wastes and illegal traffic in hazardous chemicals;⁹⁰ illegal trade in marine species;⁹¹ fisheries offences, including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing;⁹² illegal bunkering;⁹³ and intentional damage to submarine cables⁹⁴ and the marine environment.⁹⁵ Port security also remained a high priority.⁹⁶

46. Piracy and armed robbery against ships continued to decrease globally in 2021. In the first half of 2022, the International Maritime Bureau received the lowest

⁸⁰ IMO contribution.

⁸¹ IMO contribution. Also see IMO resolution MSC.496(105), Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974. The amendments will enter into force on 1 January 2024.

⁸² IMO contribution. Also see IMO resolution A.1162(32), Encouragement of Member States and all relevant stakeholders to promote actions for the prevention and suppression of fraudulent registration and fraudulent registries and other fraudulent acts in the maritime sector.

⁸³ WMO contribution.

⁸⁴ IHO contribution.

⁸⁵ IWC contribution.

⁸⁶ PIF contribution.

⁸⁷ UNODC contribution.

⁸⁸ UNODC contribution.

⁸⁹ UNODC contribution.

⁹⁰ BRS contribution.

⁹¹ CITES contribution.

⁹² FAO and OACPS contributions.

⁹³ OACPCS contribution

⁹⁴ UNODC contribution.

⁹⁵ UNODC contribution.

⁹⁶ DPPA, FAO, ILO, IMO, INTERPOL and UNODC contributions.

number of reported incidents for the first half of any year since 1994;⁹⁷ however, some areas saw increased incidents, including the Singapore Straits.⁹⁸

47. The Security Council adopted resolution 2634 (2022), calling upon Member States in the Gulf of Guinea region to, inter alia, criminalize piracy and armed robbery at sea under their domestic laws.⁹⁹ IMO adopted a resolution on prevention and suppression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea, calling upon IMO member States to assist in efforts to mitigate piracy in the region.¹⁰⁰ Following the continued improvement of the situation off the coast of Somalia, the authorization in Security Council resolution 2608 (2021) for States and regional organizations cooperating with Somalia to fight piracy off its coast expired in 2022. The United Nations Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia also ceased its operations.¹⁰¹

48. International cooperation to address other maritime crimes continued. UNODC provided training, capacity-building and technical assistance globally, including by convening maritime law enforcement dialogues in Southeast Asia and supporting the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime.¹⁰² The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) supported joint efforts of regional institutions in the Gulf of Guinea,¹⁰³ and further, United Nations entities launched a consultative mechanism to support regional efforts to address maritime security.¹⁰⁴ INTERPOL supported member countries in coordinating investigations and facilitating information exchange in relation to the kidnapping of seafarers in the Gulf of Guinea.¹⁰⁵

49. The EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA continued to protect vessels of the World Food Programme and other vulnerable vessels off the coast of Somalia.¹⁰⁶ The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) also continued to support the revitalization of Somalia's National Maritime Coordination Committee.¹⁰⁷

VII. Climate change and the ocean

50. The ocean continued to absorb the vast majority of excess heat accumulating in the climate system due to increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHG), as well as a significant proportion of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions,¹⁰⁸ helping to slow climate change, but also leading to ocean warming and sea-level rise, ocean

⁹⁷ See IMB news, Global piracy and armed robbery incidents at lowest level in decades, 12 July 2022 at: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/index.php/1320-global-piracy-and-armed-robbery-incidents-at-lowest-level-in-decades>.

⁹⁸ ReCAAP, Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia: Half Yearly Report January to June 2022, p. 5, available at: <https://www.recaap.org/reports>; IMB, Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships For the Period 1 January-30 June 2022, July 2022, p. 6.

⁹⁹ Security Council Resolution 2634 (2022) on Peace and security in Africa (Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea).

¹⁰⁰ IMO contribution. Also see IMO resolution A.1159(32), Prevention and suppression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea.

¹⁰¹ DPPA contribution.

¹⁰² UNODC contribution.

¹⁰³ DPPA contribution.

¹⁰⁴ DPPA contribution.

¹⁰⁵ INTERPOL contribution.

¹⁰⁶ DPPA contribution.

¹⁰⁷ DPPA contribution.

¹⁰⁸ IPCC, 2019: Summary for Policymakers. In: IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, M. Tignor, E. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Nicolai, A. Okem, J. Petzold, B. Rama, N.M. Weyer (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 3–35. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157964.0019>.

deoxygenation and acidification.¹⁰⁹ The past seven years have been the warmest on record, with both ocean heat content and global mean sea level reaching their highest recorded values in 2021, while ocean acidification continued to increase.¹¹⁰

51. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported that climate change caused substantial damage and increasingly irreversible losses in coastal and ocean marine ecosystems, the extent and magnitude of which were larger than previously estimated.¹¹¹ Widespread deterioration of ecosystem structure and function, resilience and natural adaptive capacity was observed, as well as shifts in seasonal timing, with adverse socioeconomic consequences, in addition to increases in extreme weather events, adverse effects on ocean-based food production, local losses of species and mass mortality events.¹¹²

52. States increasingly recognized the important link between climate change and the ocean. The political declaration issued at the close of the 2022 Ocean Conference highlighted the alarming effects of climate change on the ocean and marine life and the importance of implementing the Paris Agreement to significantly reduce risks and impacts and help to ensure the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean.¹¹³ A significant number of voluntary commitments relating to climate change were made by States and other stakeholders,¹¹⁴ including during an interactive dialogue dedicated to minimizing and addressing ocean acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming.¹¹⁵

53. In the Glasgow Climate Pact, adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at its twenty-sixth session in 2021, States took action to integrate and strengthen ocean-based action in UNFCCC processes, including by calling for an annual ocean and climate change dialogue.¹¹⁶ This year's annual dialogue focused on strengthening and integrating national ocean-climate action, enabling ocean-climate solutions, and optimising institutional connections.¹¹⁷ Recognizing the importance of further monitoring and understanding climate change impacts and opportunities, calls were made for strengthened support for ocean observation systems.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ IPCC, 2019, footnote 109 at pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁰ IMO contribution. Also see *State of the Global Climate 2021*, WMO-No. 1290, (World Meteorological Organization, 2022), pp. 6, 8-9, 11-12, 12-19 available at: https://library.wmo.int/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=22080#.Yx9nWnbMI2w.

¹¹¹ IPCC, 2022: Summary for Policymakers [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, M. Tignor, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösschke, V. Möller, A. Okem (eds.)]. In: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press, available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf.

¹¹² IPCC, 2022, footnote 112.

¹¹³ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, paras. 5-6.

¹¹⁴ See <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/action-networks/ocean-commitments>.

¹¹⁵ See Interactive dialogue 3: Minimizing and addressing ocean acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming, 29 June 2022, Key points available at: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/ID3_summary_%20Jamaica%28E%29.pdf.

¹¹⁶ UNFCCC contribution. Pursuant to decision 1/CP.26 (the Glasgow Climate Pact), para. 61, the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice was invited to hold an annual dialogue to strengthen ocean-climate action. See FCCC/CP/2021/12/Add.1, p.7 at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2021_12_add1E.pdf.

¹¹⁷ See UNFCCC news, Bonn Dialogue Urges Ocean-Based Climate Action, 22 June 2022 at: <https://unfccc.int/news/bonn-dialogue-urges-ocean-based-climate-action>.

¹¹⁸ UNFCCC contribution. See also General Assembly resolution A/77/119, Report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its twenty-second meeting, paras. 11-12, 14; General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para. 14(a).

54. In terms of mitigation, a significant increase in the level of ambition of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement is needed to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C.¹¹⁹ An increase in ocean-related mitigation measures, already contained in many NDCs, could both assist in bridging the gap and provide significant economic opportunities.

55. In supporting mitigation efforts, IMO initiated a revision of its strategy to reduce GHG emissions from shipping for possible adoption by 2023.¹²⁰ IMO also adopted a resolution on black carbon in the Arctic, urging the voluntary use of cleaner alternative fuels or methods of propulsion.¹²¹ Projects related to blue carbon ecosystems¹²² and ocean acidification were also reported.¹²³

56. With respect to adaptation, the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Programme expert group on oceans produced reports on coastal adaptation and nature-based solutions and enhancing resilience of oceans, coastal areas and ecosystems.¹²⁴ UNCTAD continued work on the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events on seaports and other critical coastal transport infrastructure to assist the development of adaptation response measures.¹²⁵ Various actions were taken by FAO, UNEP and UN-Habitat to strengthen resilience, including of vulnerable coastal communities¹²⁶ and in relation to technologies to address the impacts of climate change.¹²⁷ Capacity-building and technical assistance projects addressed the climate change vulnerability and poverty nexus.¹²⁸ Through capacity-building, research and the provision of technical expertise, including relating to nuclear and nuclear-derived tools and techniques IAEA continued to help States address climate and ocean change impacts, including ocean acidification, deoxygenation and sea-level rise.¹²⁹ IOC-UNESCO developed guidelines for the study of climate change effects on harmful algal blooms.¹³⁰

57. In terms of financing, UNFCCC highlighted the need to mobilize public, private and innovative sources of finance to take advantage of mitigation and adaptation potential of coastal and ocean-based activities and scale-up financial and technical support for developing countries.¹³¹ UNCTAD estimated that adaptation costs in developing countries were five to ten times greater than currently available adaptation finance and that the gap was widening.¹³² Urgent increases in adaptation finance

¹¹⁹ FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/8/Rev.1, Nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, para. 15, available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_08r01_E.pdf.

¹²⁰ IMO contribution.

¹²¹ IMO contribution.

¹²² IAEA, IOC-UNESCO and IWC contributions.

¹²³ IAEA and IOC-UNESCO contributions

¹²⁴ UNFCCC contribution. Also see, Coastal adaptation and nature-based solutions for the implementation of NAPs: Considerations for GCF proposal development, A supplement to the UNFCCC NAP Technical guidelines, Prepared by the NWP Expert Group on Oceans, Bonn (UNFCCC, 2021) available at: <https://unfccc.int/documents/278047>; and Enhancing resilience of oceans, coastal areas and ecosystems through collaborative partnerships, Bonn, Nairobi Work Programme (UNFCCC, 2021) available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Report%20on%20oceans_NWP.pdf.

¹²⁵ UNCTAD contribution.

¹²⁶ FAO, UNEP and UN-Habitat contributions.

¹²⁷ UNFCCC contribution.

¹²⁸ FAO and UNEP contributions.

¹²⁹ IAEA contribution.

¹³⁰ IOC contribution.

¹³¹ UNFCCC contribution; Also see Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance for Nature-based Solutions, Synthesis paper by the UNFCCC Secretariat, available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/BN7_SCF27_Forum%20synthesis%20report.pdf.

¹³² UNCTAD contribution.

remain necessary for developing countries, including SIDS, as recognized in the Glasgow Climate Pact¹³³ and affirmed at the 2022 Ocean Conference.¹³⁴

VIII. Ocean sustainability

58. Ocean health continued to decline due to, among other factors, increased ocean acidification, eutrophication and plastic pollution,¹³⁵ endangering the planet's largest ecosystem and affecting the livelihoods of billions of people. Transformative actions rooted in science, technology and innovation are needed to reverse the trend and achieve ocean sustainability, including through sustainable ocean-based economies that balance economic growth with environmental protection and social development. Advancing nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches could help ensure a sustainable, inclusive and environmentally resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,¹³⁶ including by implementing a "source-to-sea" approach that directly addresses the links between land, water, coastal and marine ecosystems in support of holistic natural resources management and economic development.¹³⁷

59. Ocean sustainability remains a focus of global commitments to achieve the 2030 Agenda,¹³⁸ as reflected in the outcomes of the 2022 Ocean Conference,¹³⁹ and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council on the theme "Building back better from the COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".¹⁴⁰ Ocean sustainability also continued to guide the implementation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science¹⁴¹ and remained a central focus in implementing the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration¹⁴² and the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.¹⁴³

60. Efforts to achieve ocean sustainability continued at all levels, including through developing and implementing regulatory frameworks, strategies, action plans and tools,¹⁴⁴ promoting sustainable trade in ocean-related goods and services,¹⁴⁵ advancing scientific knowledge and technological innovation,¹⁴⁶ promoting

¹³³ Report of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement on its third session, held in Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November 2021, FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/10/Add.1, Glasgow Climate Pact, Decision 1/CMA.3, paras. 14-19 available at:

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_10_add1_adv.pdf.

¹³⁴ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para. 6.

¹³⁵ Report of the Secretary-General, Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, E/2022/55, para.130. See also, *Second World Ocean Assessment*, chapter 1, available at: <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa2>; Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, available at: <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>.

¹³⁶ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para. 9. See also, Ministerial Declaration, HLPF 2022, footnote 8, para.63.

¹³⁷ *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*, p. 54, available at:

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf>.

¹³⁸ Report of the Secretary-General, Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, E/2022/55, paras. 130-135.

¹³⁹ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8.

¹⁴⁰ Ministerial Declaration, HLPF 2022, footnote 8, paras. 51-65.

¹⁴¹ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁴² *The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration*, available at:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31813/ERDStrat.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁴³ SCBD contribution.

¹⁴⁴ BRS, CITES, ECLAC, FAO, IHO, ILO, IOC-UNESCO, IRENA, IMO, ISA, IWC, OACPS, PIF, SCBD, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNODC and UN-Habitat contributions.

¹⁴⁵ BRS, CITES, FAO, ILO and UNCTAD contributions.

¹⁴⁶ BRS, FAO, IAEA, IHO, ILO, IOC-UNESCO, IRENA, IWC, OSPAR, PIF, SCBD, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UN-Habitat and WMO contributions.

cooperation, coordination and partnerships,¹⁴⁷ building capacity and providing technical assistance,¹⁴⁸ mobilizing resources,¹⁴⁹ and mainstreaming gender perspectives and women's empowerment,¹⁵⁰ as well as implementing international law as reflected in the Convention and related instruments.¹⁵¹

61. However, as highlighted in the *State of the Ocean Report 2022*, quantitative understanding of the ocean was drastically incomplete, with current knowledge being insufficient to effectively inform solutions to ocean issues.¹⁵² Further efforts were needed to, inter alia, communicate findings on the lack of quantitative knowledge on the ocean, promote the UN Decade of Ocean Science as the prime platform to transform ocean science, support sustainable ocean planning and management, and strengthen the ocean science-policy interface.¹⁵³

62. Many developing States, in particular LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, continue to face challenges in strengthening the means of implementation and in developing partnerships for ocean sustainability.¹⁵⁴ Inadequate financing and investments for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies also remained a major challenge.¹⁵⁵ Due to fiscal constraints and high levels of external debts, which have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as gaps in technical capacities, many SIDS and LDCs continued to face challenges in accessing financing, including through international capital markets.¹⁵⁶ Many SIDS continued to face limited access to concessional development finance due to the primary use of gross national income for allocating concessional finance, which was insufficient to capture their vulnerabilities.¹⁵⁷ Innovative financing solutions were needed, including to leverage private and philanthropic funding, as well as blended finance instruments such as risk insurance, debt swaps and blue bonds.¹⁵⁸

63. Steps were taken to address these challenges, including through the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for SIDS,¹⁵⁹ which could help facilitate access to concessional financing for developing

¹⁴⁷ BRS, ECLAC, FAO, IHO, ILO, IOC-UNESCO, IRENA, ISA, IWC, PIF, SCBD, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat and WMO contributions.

¹⁴⁸ BRS, DPPA, FAO, IHO, ILO, IOC-UNESCO, IMO, IRENA, ISA, PIF, SCBD, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNODC and WMO contributions.

¹⁴⁹ FAO, IOC-UNESCO, UNDP and UNEP contributions.

¹⁵⁰ FAO, ILO, IMO, ISA and UNEP contributions.

¹⁵¹ BRS, CITES, FAO, IHO, ILO, IMO, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, NEAFC, PIF, SCBD, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNODC and WMO contributions.

¹⁵² *State of the Ocean Report*, pilot edition, Paris, IOC-UNESCO, 2022 (IOC Technical Series, 173), available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381921>

¹⁵³ IOC-UNESCO, 2022, footnote 155.

¹⁵⁴ ECLAC and FAO contributions.

¹⁵⁵ Interactive dialogue 5: Promoting and strengthening sustainable ocean-based economies, in particular for small island developing States and least developed countries, Concept paper prepared by the Secretariat, A/CONF.230/2022/5, paras.13, 32-33, 47-50, available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/promoting-and-strengthening-sustainable-ocean-based-economies-particular-small-island>. See also, Friends of Ocean Action of the World Economic Forum, *The Ocean Finance Handbook: Increasing Finance for a Healthy Ocean*, Executive summary and Key Messages, available at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FOA_The_Ocean_Finance_Handbook_April_2020.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ A/CONF.230/2022/5, footnote 158, paras.13, 32-33, 47-50. See also, Report of the Secretary-General, Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, A/76/211, para.4.

¹⁵⁷ A/76/211, footnote 159, para.73.

¹⁵⁸ A/CONF.230/2022/5, footnote 158 paras.13 and 33. See also, A/76/211, footnote 159, para.54.

¹⁵⁹ The High-level Panel was appointed by the President of the General Assembly in February 2022: <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/mvi/hlp>. See also, *Terms of Reference of the High Level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States*, available at: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/MVI_Panel_TOR_%202021.pdf

sustainable ocean-based economies.¹⁶⁰ The 2022 Ocean Conference also included commitments to explore, develop and promote innovative financing solutions to drive the transformation to sustainable ocean-based economies and to address barriers to accessing financing.¹⁶¹

A. Increasing knowledge and understanding and promoting marine science and technology

64. As highlighted at the 2022 Ocean Conference, held under the theme “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”, ocean science and science-based decision-making, as well as the need to further strengthen the science-policy interface, were crucial for the conservation and sustainable development of the oceans and their resources.¹⁶²

65. Significant progress was being made to implement the UN Decade of Ocean Science, with 43 programmes, 146 projects and 51 contributions endorsed as Decade Actions.¹⁶³ Five Decade Collaborative Centres were established to provide coordination support¹⁶⁴ and the Decade Advisory Board and 28 National Decade Committees were operational.¹⁶⁵ At the regional level, six taskforces acted as convening partners for the development and operationalisation of regional plans and programmes.¹⁶⁶ The Ocean Decade Africa Roadmap was also launched¹⁶⁷ and engagement with stakeholders continued.¹⁶⁸

66. During the twenty-second meeting of the Informal Consultative Process (ICP), held on the theme “Ocean observing”, delegations stressed the need to cooperate and collaborate at all levels to overcome capacity gaps, make data widely accessible and encourage data-sharing activities.¹⁶⁹

67. Under the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), which consists of over 8,900 ocean observing platforms across 12 global networks,¹⁷⁰ the operation of networks impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic resumed, though at reduced scales.¹⁷¹ A co-design workshop was held with observing and modelling communities and key user stakeholders.¹⁷² The IOC-UNESCO Executive Council decided in June 2022 that information from member States on experiences regarding sustained observations in areas under national jurisdiction should be collated and reported to the Assembly of IOC-UNESCO in 2023.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁰ A/CONF.230/2022/5, footnote 158, para. 49.

¹⁶¹ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para.14(e).

¹⁶² General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, paras. 12-13, 14(a)-(d), (h).

¹⁶³ Figures current as of June 2022. See IOC-UNESCO contribution (pp. 1-2).

¹⁶⁴ IOC-UNESCO contribution (p. 1).

¹⁶⁵ IOC-UNESCO contribution (pp. 1, 3).

¹⁶⁶ IOC-UNESCO contribution (p. 3).

¹⁶⁷ IOC-UNESCO contribution (p. 1).

¹⁶⁸ IOC-UNESCO contribution (p. 4).

¹⁶⁹ See A/77/119, footnote 119. Also see report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea on the topic of focus of the twenty-second meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, A/77/68.

¹⁷⁰ IOC-UNESCO contribution (pp. 1, 8).

¹⁷¹ IOC-UNESCO contribution (p. 8).

¹⁷² IOC-UNESCO contribution (p. 11).

¹⁷³ See IOC Executive Council Decision EC-55/3.4, Ocean Observations in Areas under National Jurisdiction.

68. Specific actions were taken to further research on ocean acidification,¹⁷⁴ deoxygenation,¹⁷⁵ ocean and blue carbon,¹⁷⁶ harmful algae blooms,¹⁷⁷ marine invasive species,¹⁷⁸ marine pollution, including marine litter,¹⁷⁹ marine species and ecosystems,¹⁸⁰ bathymetry,¹⁸¹ oceanography,¹⁸² and more generally to strengthen regional and national ocean observations, including early warning systems.¹⁸³ New data was also collected for Goal 14 indicators 14.3.1 (ocean acidification) and 14a.1 (ocean research capacity),¹⁸⁴ while data on indicator 14.4.1 (sustainable fish stocks) was assessed and reported in 2022.¹⁸⁵ Data continued to be collected under the auspices of various conventions,¹⁸⁶ together with the promotion, in some instances, of technology transfer.¹⁸⁷

69. Efforts were underway to improve data management and sharing.¹⁸⁸ The International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange network comprises 93 national data centres, while the Ocean Biodiversity Information System saw an exponential increase in its data records, containing nearly 100 million occurrences drawn from 4,000 datasets.¹⁸⁹ The WMO Unified Data Policy was approved and required WMO member States to make freely available certain ocean observation data.¹⁹⁰ Work continued on standardizing hydrographic frameworks¹⁹¹ and deep-sea taxonomy.¹⁹² The Authority launched an initiative to advance, through knowledge-sharing, scientific understanding of deep-sea ecosystems in the Area.¹⁹³ The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly recognized the importance of science monitoring and reliable telecommunications submarine cable systems for climate change and seismic monitoring.¹⁹⁴

70. Activities continued to strengthen the regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment and enhance the scientific basis for policymaking. The third cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (2021-2025) began its first round of regional workshops to inform the scoping exercise and development of annotated outlines of the assessments to be produced, collect regional data, raise awareness and provide information and generate interest from the scientific community in contributing to the drafting of the assessments. A separate first round of regional workshops aimed at strengthening the ocean science-policy interface also began. Four brief documents for policymakers based on the Second World Ocean

¹⁷⁴ IOC-UNESCO and IAEA contributions.

¹⁷⁵ IOC-UNESCO contribution (pp. 6-7).

¹⁷⁶ IOC-UNESCO and IAEA contributions.

¹⁷⁷ IOC-UNESCO contribution (pp. 23-25).

¹⁷⁸ IOC-UNESCO contribution (pp. 25-26).

¹⁷⁹ IWC, FAO, UNEP, BRS, CTMFM, IAEA and IMO contributions.

¹⁸⁰ CITES, CPPS, CTMFM, FAO, IAEA, IWC, NAFO, NEAFC, SCBD and UNEP contributions.

¹⁸¹ IHO, ISA and PICES contributions.

¹⁸² CPPS and IOC-UNESCO contributions.

¹⁸³ CPPS, IOC-UNESCO and WMO contributions.

¹⁸⁴ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁸⁵ FAO contribution.

¹⁸⁶ BRS and CTMFM contributions. See also MINAMATA contribution.

¹⁸⁷ BRS contribution. See also IMO contribution.

¹⁸⁸ See generally IOC-UNESCO and UNEP contributions.

¹⁸⁹ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁹⁰ WMO Resolution 4.1/1 (Cg-Ext(2021), WMO Unified Policy for the International Exchange of Earth System Data. See IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁹¹ IHO contribution (p. 3).

¹⁹² ISA contribution (p. 3).

¹⁹³ ISA contribution (p. 3). See also FAO contribution on deep-sea ecosystems (p. 16).

¹⁹⁴ *Proceedings of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-20)*, ITU, 2022, available at: https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-t/opb/reg/T-REG-LIV.1-2022-PDF-E.pdf.

Assessment will be finalized during the sixteenth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process, focusing on Climate Change, Goal 14, the United Nations Decades on Ecosystem Restoration and on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and Marine Biodiversity.

71. The first pilot edition of the IOC-UNESCO State of the Ocean Report was issued in 2022 to complement the World Ocean Assessment process in providing accessible information on the state of the ocean and its management.¹⁹⁵

B. Conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources

72. Despite global commitments in the 2030 Agenda regarding the sustainability of fish stocks,¹⁹⁶ the status of the world's fish stocks continued to deteriorate, with 35.4 per cent of fish stocks fished at biologically unsustainable levels in 2019, up from 34.6 per cent in 2017.¹⁹⁷ Additional urgent efforts are needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of fish stocks, as rebuilding overfished stocks could increase marine capture fisheries production by 16.5 million tonnes and contribute to the food security, nutrition, economies and well-being of coastal communities.¹⁹⁸

73. A recent study suggested that scientifically assessed and intensively managed stocks at regional and national levels had resulted, on average, in stock abundance levels increasing or maintaining at proposed target levels, thus highlighting the need to replicate and re-adapt these successful policies and regulations in fisheries that were not managed sustainably and create innovative mechanisms to promote sustainable use and conservation.¹⁹⁹

74. A wide range of actions were taken to improve fisheries management at the global and regional levels.²⁰⁰ The 2022 International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA) focused some activities on small scale and artisanal fishing.²⁰¹ The human dimension of fishing and fisheries also remained a key concern, in part, due to the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰² Draft technical guidelines for the regulation and monitoring of transshipment were also developed by the FAO Technical Consultation on Voluntary Guidelines for Transshipment held from 30 May to 3 June 2022 for the consideration of the FAO Committee on Fisheries in September 2022.²⁰³

75. The fifteenth round of the Informal Consultations of States Parties to the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement considered implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management and served as a preparatory meeting for the resumption of

¹⁹⁵ IOC-UNESCO contribution (p. 1).

¹⁹⁶ In the 2030 Agenda, States committed to “effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics” by 2020.

¹⁹⁷ FAO, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Towards Blue Transformation*, (Rome, 2022), p. 46, available at: www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0461. The same report also indicates that biologically sustainable stocks accounted for 82.5 per cent of the 2019 landings of assessed stocks monitored by FAO.

¹⁹⁸ FAO, 2022, footnote 200, p. 55.

¹⁹⁹ FAO, 2022, footnote 200, p. 56. Also see Hilborn, R. et al. 2020. “Effective fisheries management instrumental in improving fish stock status”. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(4): 2218–2224, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1909726116>.

²⁰⁰ ASCOBANS, CITES, CTMFM, FAO, IOC-UNESCO, IWC, NAFO, NASCO, NEAFC, NPAFC, OACPCS, PIF, SCBD, SEAFO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP and UNODC contributions.

²⁰¹ FAO contribution.

²⁰² FAO contribution.

²⁰³ FAO contribution.

the Review Conference on the Agreement.²⁰⁴ A multi-stakeholder workshop held in August 2022 will inform the General Assembly's further review of actions taken by States and regional fisheries management organizations to address the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks in November 2022.²⁰⁵

76. With regard to fisheries subsidies, adoption of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in June 2022 brought the international community closer to meeting the commitment set out in target 14.6 of the 2030 Agenda.²⁰⁶ New disciplines on fisheries subsidies will have positive effects on the sustainability of marine fish stocks and fisheries by curbing subsidies to IUU fishing, fishing on overfished stocks and fishing for unregulated high seas fish stocks. The WTO will continue negotiations on the outstanding issues, with a view to making recommendations to the thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference for additional provisions that would achieve a comprehensive agreement on fisheries subsidies, including further disciplines on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.²⁰⁷

C. Protection and preservation of the marine environment and conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity

77. The 2022 Ocean Conference declared that there was a 'global emergency' facing the ocean and transformative action was needed to halt and reverse marine biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and protect and restore ocean health.²⁰⁸

78. At the global level, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) convened an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment by 2024 and to thereby address one of the ocean's most pressing pollution sources.²⁰⁹ An ad hoc open-ended working group had its first meeting to begin preparations for the committee's work.²¹⁰

79. Related initiatives included a WTO Ministerial Statement on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade,²¹¹ launch of UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities Tool to identify sources of plastic leakage from municipal solid waste management chains,²¹² publication of reports by UNEP and GESAMP on marine litter

²⁰⁴ For further details, see:

https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/fish_stocks_agreement_states_parties.htm.

²⁰⁵ For further details, see: https://www.un.org/depts/los/bottom_fishing_workshop.htm.

²⁰⁶ Sustainable Development Goal Target 14.6 provides: By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing, and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiation.

²⁰⁷ See Protocol Amending the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, as attachment to WTO Ministerial Decision dated 17 June 2022, available at: <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/WT/MIN22/33.pdf>. Also see, "Implementing the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies: Challenges and Opportunities for Developing and Least-Developed Country Members, World Trade Organization, 2022 available at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/implementfishagreement22_e.htm

²⁰⁸ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, paras. 4, 5, 7

²⁰⁹ UNEP contribution (para. 12), referring to resolution UNEP/EA.5/Res.14, "End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument".

²¹⁰ UNEP contribution (para. 12).

²¹¹ UNCTAD contribution (p. 4), referring to MC12 Ministerial Statement on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade, WT/MIN(21)/8.

²¹² UN-Habitat contribution (p. 1).

and plastic pollution,²¹³ and the IAEA NUTEC Plastics initiative to integrate nuclear techniques into plastic pollution control efforts.²¹⁴ Various strategies and regional and national action plans relating to the marine environment, including marine litter, were adopted or amended, or were being developed.²¹⁵

80. With respect to chemicals and waste, UNEA committed to strengthen efforts to achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes and to reduce their release, including into water.²¹⁶ Technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of waste were adopted under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.²¹⁷

81. The Barcelona Convention Protocols and the Minamata Convention were amended regarding, respectively, pollution from offshore and land-based sources²¹⁸ and to phase out certain mercury-added products by 2025.²¹⁹ UNEP and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds provided technical assistance in relation to oil and chemical spills in various regions,²²⁰ while concerned stakeholders were undertaking international consultations regarding the proposed release of treated nuclear wastewater at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.²²¹ The UN continued fundraising efforts to implement an UN-coordinated operational plan to address potential environmental damage from oil stored on board the FSO *Safer* off the coast of Yemen.²²² The IWC continued work to address the impact of pollution on cetaceans.²²³

82. With respect specifically to the impacts of shipping on the marine environment, IMO designated the Mediterranean Sea as an emission control area under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), with stricter limits on ship-based sulphur oxide emissions applicable from 2025.²²⁴ Amendments were made to the Barcelona Convention Protocol relating to dumping and incineration in the Mediterranean Sea.²²⁵ Amendments to the Ballast Water Convention making commissioning testing of ballast water management systems mandatory entered into force in June 2022.²²⁶

²¹³ IMO and UNEP contributions.

²¹⁴ IAEA contribution. Other earlier initiatives continued, such as the GloLitter Partnerships project by FAO and the IMO to assist developing countries to address marine plastic litter from sea-based sources. See FAO contribution (p. 18), referring to the GloLitter Partnerships project. For further details, see: <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/PartnershipsProjects/Pages/GloLitter-Partnerships-Project.aspx>.

²¹⁵ IMO contribution (p. 7), referring to the IMO Strategy to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships, MEPC.341(77); OSPAR contribution (pp. 2-3) referring to the second OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, available at: <https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=48461>; UNEP contribution (pp. 2, 8, 11, 13-16, 20, 23); CPPS contribution (para. 8), referring to the Plan Regional para la Gestión Integral de la Basura Marina en el Pacífico Sudeste, 2022- 2032, available at: <http://cpps.dyndns.info/cpps-docs-web/planaccion/docs2022/publicaciones/PRGIBMPS.pdf>. See also SCBD contribution (para. 24).

²¹⁶ UNEP contribution (p. 1), referring to UNEP/EA.5/Res.7, “Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste” available at: wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/39755;jsessionid.

²¹⁷ BRS contribution (paras. 10-15).

²¹⁸ UNEP contribution (paras. 2, 7). See Decisions IG.25/5 and IG.25/7 in UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, UNEP/MED IG.25/27, available at: <https://www.unep.org/unepmap/meetings/cop-decisions/cop22-outcome-documents>.

²¹⁹ MINAMATA contribution (p. 1).

²²⁰ UNEP and IOPC contributions. See also UNODC contribution (p. 6).

²²¹ PIF contribution (section 6.1).

²²² For further details, see: <https://www.un.org/en/StopRedSeaSpill>.

²²³ IWC contribution (paras 2.3-2.4).

²²⁴ IMO and UNEP contributions.

²²⁵ UNEP contribution (para. 2). See Decision IG.25/56 in UNEP/MED IG.25/27, footnote 221.

²²⁶ IMO contribution (p. 7).

83. Regarding marine biodiversity, negotiations continued at the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference, with sessions held in March and August 2022, and will resume at a date to be determined. Discussions also continued on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in the context of the CBD.²²⁷ During the reporting period, continuous intersessional work took place with respect to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which is expected to be adopted by the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the CBD in December 2022.²²⁸

84. Coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, saltmarshes, seagrasses and coral reefs, as well as marine migratory species and marine invasive species continued to be a focus of attention.²²⁹ Growing concern for the conservation status of certain marine species, including sharks, rays and sea cucumbers resulted in their inclusion in appendices to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.²³⁰

85. Activities continued to support the implementation of various management tools, such as sustainable ocean plans,²³¹ and ecosystem-based²³² and precautionary approaches, including with respect to fisheries.²³³ Marine spatial planning was increasingly promoted as a tool for sustainable ocean use, including to take account of transboundary issues.²³⁴

86. Area-based management tools, including marine protected areas (MPAs), continued to be used worldwide,²³⁵ with proposals and initiatives made for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to include a target of conserving 30 per cent of ocean areas by 2030.²³⁶ At the regional level, OSPAR designated a new MPA covering the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seamount to protect seabirds.²³⁷ In reviewing the implementation of the regional environmental management plan (REMP) for the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, the Authority's Council approved the designation of four additional areas as of particular environmental interest.²³⁸ A draft REMF for the northern Mid-Atlantic Ridge was also released.²³⁹

IX. Strengthening international cooperation and coordination, including through integrated and cross-sectoral approaches

87. Activities aimed at strengthening cooperation and coordination continued at all levels. UN-Oceans hosted a high-level side event at the 2022 Ocean Conference to,

²²⁷ SCBD contribution (paras. 1, 5-9).

²²⁸ SCBD contribution (paras. 2-4).

²²⁹ CPPS (paras. 4, 5 and 7), IAEA (p. 5), IOC-UNESCO (paras 131-135), NASCO (p. 2), UNDP (p. 1), UNEP (p. 4) and UN-Habitat (para. 3) contributions. Also see General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para. 4.

²³⁰ CITES (pp. 1-2) and SCBD (para. 21) contributions. See also NAFO (p. 5) and NEAFC (p. 5) contributions.

²³¹ IOC-UNESCO (para. 162) contribution, referring to the Ocean Action 2030 coalition. See also PIF (para.7.3) contribution.

²³² FAO (pp. 2, 6), NAFO (p. 5), NEAFC (p. 2), OACPS (p. 3) and UNEP (p. 6) contributions. See also IOC-UNESCO (paras. 31, 136) contribution.

²³³ NAFO (p. 4), NASCO (p. 2) and OACPS (p. 3) contributions.

²³⁴ IOC-UNESCO (paras. 155-162), UNDP (p. 1) and UNEP (pp.1-2, 4, 14) contributions. See also IHO (para. 10) contribution.

²³⁵ CPPS (para. 6), FAO (p. 15), IWC (section 3.1), NAFO (pp. 2, 5), NEAFC (pp. 2, 4-5), UNDP (p. 1), UNEP (p. 19), contributions. See also PIF (para. 7.3) contribution.

²³⁶ FAO (p. 15) contribution, for example, on the Blue Leaders' Initiative and the 30x30 Initiative.

²³⁷ OSPAR (p. 3) contribution.

²³⁸ ISA (para. 8) contribution.

²³⁹ ISA (para. 9) contribution.

inter alia, showcase successful instances of inter-agency cooperation and coordination, including on ocean science and observation, climate change, harmful fisheries subsidies, the well-being of seafarers and capacity-building; highlight the crucial role of cooperation and coordination in leveraging resources and expertise; and draw attention to certain challenges including relating to gender mainstreaming and resource constraints for inter-agency cooperation.²⁴⁰ UN-Oceans also continued to hold regular meetings, including to discuss and adopt its work programme for 2022,²⁴¹ and shared information on activities and opportunities for collaboration.

88. UN-Oceans members actively supported ocean-related processes, such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science, including as members of the Decade Advisory Board, the twenty-second meeting of ICP and the UNFCCC climate change and ocean dialogues. At the 2022 Ocean Conference, UN-Oceans made a voluntary commitment on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at 40: Successes and Future Prospects.²⁴²

89. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, in close collaboration with Member States, contributed to high level and other oceans-related events with a view to promoting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its targets. He conveyed messages centred, inter alia, around highlighting the connectivity between climate change, biodiversity loss and the decline of ocean health and promoting a successful 2022 Ocean Conference. As co-chair of the Friends of Ocean Action group of stakeholders, the Special Envoy contributed to its campaigns regarding the removal of harmful fisheries subsidies, greening of shipping, renewable offshore energy, Blue Carbon, control of plastic pollution, ending of IUU Fishing and other SDG14-related issues.

90. Cooperation and coordination on ocean issues was strengthened among intergovernmental organizations, States and other stakeholders, including at the regional level²⁴³ and often on a cross-sectoral basis, including regarding marine living resources,²⁴⁴ marine litter such as marine plastics and microplastics,²⁴⁵ sustainable and resilient shipping,²⁴⁶ marine spatial planning and the use of area-based management tools,²⁴⁷ emergency prevention and response²⁴⁸ and sustainable ocean-based economies.²⁴⁹ Progress was also made in promoting cooperation and coordination with respect to advancing ocean science,²⁵⁰ including in mobilizing the ocean data value chain,²⁵¹ and in addressing the human dimension of ocean governance, such as gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment,²⁵² the well-being of maritime workers²⁵³ and protecting refugees and migrants at sea.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁰ See "Scaling up ocean action through inter-agency cooperation and coordination: Case studies, challenges and opportunities", Concept note, available at: <http://www.unoceans.org/activities/en/>.

²⁴¹ Available at: <http://www.unoceans.org/documents/en/>.

²⁴² For further details, see: <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/united-nations-convention-law-sea-40-successes-and-future-prospects>.

²⁴³ FAO (pp. 19-20), IOC-UNESCO, SCBD (paras. 15-16), UNEP and WMO (p. 3) contributions. See also, NAFO (p. 6), NEAFC (pp. 5-6) and OSPAR (pp. 3-4) contributions.

²⁴⁴ CITES (p. 2) and UNODC (p. 6) contributions.

²⁴⁵ BRS (paras. 38, 41, 42, 47), FAO (pp. 12-13, 18), IAEA (p. 6), IWC (pp. 5-6), UNEP (p. 12) and UN-Habitat (p. 1) contributions.

²⁴⁶ BRS (para. 33), IMO (para. 3), UNCTAD (pp. 9-10) and UNEP (p. 7) contributions.

²⁴⁷ IOC-UNESCO (paras. 158-161), IWC (p. 7), SCBD (paras. 17-20) and UNEP (p. 6-7) contributions.

²⁴⁸ BRS (para. 44) and UNEP (p. 16) contributions.

²⁴⁹ UNCTAD (p. 3-4) and UN-Habitat (p. 1) contributions.

²⁵⁰ IOC-UNESCO and ISA (paras. 11-15) contributions.

²⁵¹ IAEA (pp. 2-4), IHO (para. 20), UNEP (p. 5) and WMO (p. 2) contributions.

²⁵² DPPA (pp. 1-2), ILO (p. 3), ISA (para. 16) and UNEP (p. 5) contributions.

²⁵³ ILO (pp. 5-8, 11-12, 15-16 and 18), IMO (p. 1) and UNCTAD (pp. 7, 12-13) contributions.

²⁵⁴ UNHCR (paras. 3, 6) and UNODC (pp. 4-5) contributions.

91. The importance of international cooperation and partnerships based in science, technology and innovation was highlighted at the 2022 Ocean Conference,²⁵⁵ which included commitments to enhance cooperation at all levels²⁵⁶ and establish effective partnerships, including multi-stakeholder, public-private, cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and scientific partnerships.²⁵⁷ Delegations also called for enhanced inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, through the work of UN-Oceans, to support implementation of Goal 14.²⁵⁸

92. HLPF conducted an in-depth review of the implementation of Goal 14, together with Goals 4, 5, 15 and 17.²⁵⁹ The resulting ministerial declaration stressed the need for an integrated, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to ocean management, as well as for enhanced cooperation, coordination and policy coherence at all levels to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.²⁶⁰ Relevant actors were encouraged to better address interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs between the Sustainable Development Goals, including through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, among others.²⁶¹

X. Capacity-building and technical assistance to States

93. A wide range of capacity-building initiatives were implemented to assist developing States in sustainably managing ocean spaces, resources and activities, including through implementation of the Convention and related instruments.²⁶²

94. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, provided information, advice and assistance to States and intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders through its capacity-building programmes, including technical assistance projects and fellowships and participation in conferences, meetings, workshops and training events.²⁶³ Some in-person activities resumed as COVID-19-related restrictions lifted, while other programmes were held virtually to ensure effective delivery of needs-based assistance to Member States, in particular LDCs and SIDS.

95. The Division continued to assist developing countries in implementing the Convention and its implementing agreements, and promoting strengthened, sustainable and inclusive ocean economies, including by taking into account constraints posed by the pandemic.²⁶⁴ It also co-facilitated several workshops together with UNCTAD to assist Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica in developing ocean economy and trade strategies and realizing economic benefits from sustainable use of marine resources.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁵ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para.13.

²⁵⁶ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para.14(c).

²⁵⁷ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para.14(d).

²⁵⁸ General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8, para.16.

²⁵⁹ See Ministerial Declaration, HLPF 2022, footnote 8.

²⁶⁰ See Ministerial Declaration, HLPF 2022, footnote 8, para.52.

²⁶¹ Ministerial Declaration, HLPF 2022, footnote 8, para.28.

²⁶² BRS, DPPA, FAO, IAEA, IHO, ILO, IMO, INTERPOL, IOC-UNESCO, IRENA, ISA, ITLOS, IWC, NEAFC, PCA, PIF, SCBD, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNODC and WMO contributions.

²⁶³ For more information, see www.un.org/oceancapacity and “Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea list of activities from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022” at: www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm.

²⁶⁴ See www.un.org/oceancapacity/norway for additional information, including assistance available through the project activities.

²⁶⁵ See www.un.org/oceancapacity/oets.

96. The Division also continued contributing to the development and implementation of the World Bank PROBLUE funded programme, including through online training in ocean governance, in partnership with the University of Melbourne Law School, the Center for Maritime and Oceanic Law at the University of Nantes, the Authority and FAO.²⁶⁶ The Division further delivered, with the assistance of the UNDP country office, an in-person training in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to build capacity in ocean affairs and the law of the sea with a focus on maritime boundaries and dispute settlement.²⁶⁷

97. The Division continued to administer nine voluntary trust funds to assist developing States regarding implementation of the Convention and its implementing agreements, participation in ocean-related meetings and intergovernmental processes and the settlement of disputes through the Tribunal.²⁶⁸

98. The Authority continued its capacity development and training programmes on deep sea issues, including through webinars and workshops, a fellowship and internship programme, and development of an e-learning platform.²⁶⁹ The Tribunal established a junior professional programme on dispute settlement under the Convention.²⁷⁰

Fellowships

99. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division continued to successfully implement its training activities in 2021, albeit in a virtual format, and subsequently resumed in-person training activities in 2022. In December 2021, it delivered an online training programme to reinforce capacity in the context of the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference. After initial postponement, the highly appreciated 2020/2021 United Nations-Nippon Foundation, Critical Needs and Thematic Fellowships were delivered in hybrid format, with online training and supervision in the second half of 2021, and in-person activities delivered in June 2022. The 2022 United Nations-Nippon Foundation and the Strategic Needs Fellowships were delivered in-person in March and August 2022, respectively. Implementation of the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was expected to resume in 2023.²⁷¹

100. Overall, the fellowships are characterized by their broad geographic scope, with significant participation of fellows from LDCs (25%), LLDCs (3%) and SIDS (24%) in the United Nations-Nippon Foundation fellowships. Also noteworthy is the commitment to achieving gender parity in each of the United Nations-Nippon Foundation fellowship programmes implemented over the years and the increasing

²⁶⁶ See www.un.org/oceancapacity/WorldBank.

²⁶⁷ See www.un.org/oceancapacity/SA.

²⁶⁸ For more information, see www.un.org/oceancapacity/tf and “Status of voluntary trust funds administered by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (1 August 2021–31 July 2022)” available at: www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm.

²⁶⁹ ISA contribution. A capacity development strategy adopted by the Assembly of the Authority aims at further promoting and strengthening capacity development programmes and initiatives for developing States to ensure more effective participation in activities carried out in the Area and in the work of the Authority (see updates on the twenty-seventh session of the Authority at: <https://isa.org/jm/sessions/27th-session-2022>).

²⁷⁰ ITLOS contribution.

²⁷¹ Since 2004, in the context of the United Nations-Nippon Foundation Fellowship Programme, 173 individuals (90 men and 83 women) from 74 countries have been trained. Since 2018, under the United Nations-Nippon Foundation Sustainable Ocean Programme, 15 Critical Needs Fellows (6 men and 9 women) and 34 Thematic Fellows (17 men and 17 women) were trained, and 181 delegates (87 men and 94 women) undertook training relating to the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference. While the Sustainable Ocean Programme ended in 2021, the Critical Needs Fellowship (renamed Strategic Needs Fellowship) continued in 2022. A total of 33 individuals (18 men and 15 women) from 30 developing countries have completed the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship since its inception in 1986.

number of women awarded (44 per cent women in the first decade of implementation, 2004-2014, and 51 per cent women in the second decade thus far, 2015 to present). As for the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship, it has ensured equal representation of men and women throughout its nearly 40 years of existence.

XI. Conclusions

101. The global ocean is in a state of emergency due to the cumulative impacts of decades of unsustainable human activities and anthropogenic impacts, including GHG emissions, marine pollution and overexploitation of resources. Decisive and urgent action, greater ambition and innovation are needed at all levels to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems and to achieve Goal 14 and the 2030 Agenda.²⁷²

102. Significant economic opportunities may be realised through investment in ocean- and nature-based solutions, including in climate-resilient coastal infrastructure, renewable ocean-based energy, sustainable shipping, restoring and conserving coastal ecosystems, implementation of effective area-based conservation measures and integrated coastal zone management and establishing universal early warning system coverage. Encouraging steps are being taken, including through the increasing recognition of the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus.

103. Science-based decision-making and a strengthened science-policy interface are crucial elements in ocean sustainability. Building on the 2022 Ocean Conference and the UN Decade of Ocean Science, increased science and innovation will help to understand ocean challenges and drive new global ocean action, including through private and public partnerships that support ocean research and sustainable management.

104. Urgent efforts are needed to address the challenges faced by developing States. Capacity-building, developing partnerships for sustainable ocean-based economies and adequate and sustainable funding are essential to support ambitious actions. Innovative financing solutions need to be identified and barriers to existing financing removed.

105. While there are initiatives currently aimed at strengthening international cooperation for the safety of refugees and migrants moving by sea, further concerted effort is needed to ensure their protection, including through implementation of adequate and effective search and rescue arrangements and safe disembarkation.

106. Alongside these efforts, greater coordination is needed to strengthen regular and safe migration pathways at entry points and along migratory routes to assist vulnerable persons, including victims of trafficking and unaccompanied children, as well as refugees requiring international protection. Awareness raising and information dissemination for refugees and migrants need to be enhanced.

107. Concerted efforts and collaboration between UN agencies, Member States and international organizations are helping to protect and enhance the living and working conditions of seafarers and transport workers. Ensuring a global and integrated

²⁷² 2022 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, Lisbon, 27 June-1 July 2022, Outcome of the Conference, now General Assembly resolution 76/296, annex, footnote 8. Also see, Secretary-General's opening remarks to United Nations Ocean Conference, 27 June 2022, available at: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2022-06-27/secretary-generals-opening-remarks-united-nations-ocean-conference>.

approach to these challenges, including through strengthened cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination, remains vital.

108. Continued deterioration of the status of fish stocks also requires urgent action, in line with the commitments undertaken in the 2030 Agenda. The new WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies is a welcome development; however, States need to take the necessary actions to ensure its early entry into force and implementation, including through capacity-building initiatives.

109. On the fortieth anniversary of the Convention, revitalized efforts are needed to strengthen its full and effective implementation, together with its implementing agreements. International cooperation and coordination through integrated and cross-sectoral approaches, including through mechanisms such as UN-Oceans, continue to be critical to leverage expertise and limited resources, enhance synergies and reduce duplication.

110. The 2022 Ocean Conference mobilized action, with voluntary commitments made by participating governments, international organizations and other stakeholders presenting important opportunities that will need to be acted upon if further progress is to be made.
