



# General Assembly

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**Seventy-sixth session**

Agenda items 20 and 78 (a)

**Sustainable development****Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea**

## **Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 July 2022**

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/76/L.72](#))]

### **76/296. Our ocean, our future, our responsibility**

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution [73/292](#) of 9 May 2019 and its decision 75/578 of 9 September 2021, in which it decided that the high-level 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 would be held in Lisbon, from 27 June to 1 July 2022,

1. *Expresses its profound gratitude* to the Governments of Kenya and Portugal for discharging their co-hosting responsibilities by assuming the costs of 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 and its preparatory process and for providing all necessary support;

2. *Endorses* the declaration entitled “Our ocean, our future, our responsibility” adopted by the Conference, as contained in the annex to the present resolution.

*96th plenary meeting  
21 July 2022*

**Annex****Our ocean, our future, our responsibility**

1. We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives meeting in Lisbon from 27 June to 1 July 2022 at the United Nations Conference to Support



the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under the overarching theme, “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”, with the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, reaffirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources. Greater ambition is required at all levels to address the dire state of the ocean. As leaders and representatives of our Governments, we are determined to act decisively and urgently to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems.

2. We reaffirm the declaration entitled “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, adopted by the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, held from 5 to 9 June 2017.

3. We recognize that the ocean is fundamental to life on our planet and to our future. The ocean is an important source of the planet’s biodiversity and plays a vital role in the climate system and water cycle. The ocean provides a range of ecosystem services, supplies us with oxygen to breathe, contributes to food security, nutrition and decent jobs and livelihoods, acts as a sink and reservoir of greenhouse gases and protects biodiversity, provides a means for maritime transportation, including for global trade, forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage and plays an essential role in sustainable development, a sustainable ocean-based economy and poverty eradication. We underline the interlinkages and potential synergies between Goal 14 and the other Sustainable Development Goals and recognize that the implementation of Goal 14 can contribute significantly to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, which is integrated and indivisible in its nature.

4. We are therefore deeply alarmed by the global emergency facing the ocean. Sea levels are rising, coastal erosion is worsening and the ocean is warmer and more acidic. Marine pollution is increasing at an alarming rate, a third of fish stocks are overexploited, marine biodiversity continues to decrease and approximately half of all living coral has been lost, while alien invasive species pose a significant threat to marine ecosystems and resources. While progress has been made towards the achievement of some of the targets of Goal 14, action is not advancing at the speed or scale required to meet our goals. We deeply regret our collective failure to achieve targets 14.2, 14.4, 14.5 and 14.6 that matured in 2020, and we renew our commitment to taking urgent action and to cooperating at the global, regional and subregional levels to achieve all targets as soon as possible without undue delay.

5. We reaffirm that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and we are deeply alarmed by the adverse effects of climate change on the ocean and marine life, including the rise in ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, deoxygenation, sea level rise, the decrease in polar ice coverage, shifts in the abundance and distribution of marine species, including fish, the decrease in marine biodiversity, as well as coastal erosion and extreme weather events and related impacts on island and coastal communities, as highlighted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its special report entitled *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* and its successive reports.

6. We emphasize the particular importance of implementing the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the goal to limit the temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change and help to ensure the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and thus our future. We recall that article 2.2 of the Paris

Agreement states that it will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances. We also emphasize the need to adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change. We reaffirm the importance of implementing the Glasgow Climate Pact on mitigation, adaptation and the provision and mobilization of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to developing countries, including small island developing States. We welcome the decision by the parties to the Framework Convention to recognize the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring ecosystems, including marine ecosystems, to deliver crucial services, including acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, reducing vulnerability to climate change impacts and supporting sustainable livelihoods, including for indigenous peoples and local communities. We further welcome the invitation to relevant work programmes and constituted bodies under the Framework Convention to consider how to integrate and strengthen ocean-based action in relevant mandates and workplans and the invitation to the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to hold an annual dialogue to strengthen ocean-based action.

7. We are deeply concerned by the findings about cumulative human impacts on the ocean, including ecosystem degradation and species extinctions, as highlighted in the second *World Ocean Assessment* and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, as well as on food safety and human health as recognized in the One Health approach. We recognize the need for transformative change and are committed to halting and reversing the decline in the health of the ocean's ecosystems and biodiversity and to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity. We call for an ambitious, balanced, practical, effective, robust and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the second part of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. We take note of the voluntary commitments by more than 100 Member States to conserve or protect at least 30 per cent of the global ocean within marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2030. We emphasize that strong governance and adequate financing for developing countries, in particular small island developing States, is essential to effectively implement and maintain such areas and measures. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) and its call to support and scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

8. We welcome the decision by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme at its resumed fifth session, in resolution 5/14 of 2 March 2022, to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, taking into account, among other things, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as national circumstances and capabilities.

9. We recognize the devastating impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the ocean-based economy and in particular the ocean-based economies of small island developing States, which have been disproportionately adversely affected by the pandemic, given their dependence on the ocean-based economy, as well as on seafarers and the fishing community. We also recognize the threat to ocean health caused by the COVID-19 pandemic due to improper waste management, including of plastic waste, such as personal protective equipment, which has exacerbated the problem of marine plastic litter and microplastics in the ocean. We

affirm that the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and the advancement of nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches play a critical role in ensuring a sustainable, inclusive and environmentally resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. We emphasize that our actions to implement Goal 14 should be in accordance with, reinforce and not duplicate or undermine existing legal instruments, arrangements, processes, mechanisms or entities. We affirm the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”. We note that 2022 marks the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention.

11. We recognize the importance of the work being undertaken by 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 and call upon participating delegations to reach an ambitious agreement without delay.

12. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and its vision to achieve the science we need for the ocean we want. We support the Decade’s mission to generate and use knowledge for the transformational action needed to achieve a healthy, safe and resilient ocean for sustainable development by 2030 and beyond. We fully support the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in implementing the Decade and commit to supporting these efforts.

13. We stress that science-based and innovative actions and international cooperation and partnerships based in science, technology and innovation, in line with the precautionary approach and ecosystem-based approaches, can contribute to the solutions necessary to overcome challenges in achieving Goal 14 in the following ways:

(a) Informing integrated ocean management, planning and decision-making, through improving our understanding of the impact of cumulative human activities on the ocean and anticipating the impacts of planned activities and eliminating or minimizing their negative effects, as well as the effectiveness of adopted measures;

(b) Restoring and maintaining fish stocks at levels that produce at least maximum sustainable yield in the shortest time feasible, including by implementing science-based management plans, and minimizing waste, unwanted by-catch and discards, as well as combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including through technological tools for monitoring, control and surveillance, and ending harmful subsidies in line with target 14.6, as well as through the use of an ecosystem approach to fisheries that protects essential habitats and promotes collaborative processes for decision-making that include all stakeholders, including small-scale and artisanal fisheries, recognizing their role in poverty eradication and ending food insecurity, and the importance of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture;

(c) Mobilizing actions for sustainable fisheries and sustainable aquaculture for sufficient, safe and nutritious food, recognizing the central role of healthy oceans in resilient food systems and for achieving the 2030 Agenda;

(d) Preventing, reducing and controlling marine pollution of all kinds, from both land- and sea-based sources, including nutrient pollution, untreated wastewater,

solid waste discharges, hazardous substances, emissions from the maritime sector, including shipping, pollution from shipwrecks and anthropogenic underwater noise, through improving our understanding of their sources, pathways and impacts on marine ecosystems, and through contributing to comprehensive life-cycle and source-to-sea approaches that include improved waste management;

(e) Preventing, reducing and eliminating marine plastic litter, including single-use plastics and microplastics, including through contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches, encouraging resource efficiency and recycling, as well as environmentally sound waste management, ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, developing viable alternatives for consumer and industrial uses, taking into account the full environmental impacts, innovation in product design and environmentally sound remediation of marine plastic litter that is already in marine environments, and recognizing the establishment by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session of an intergovernmental negotiating committee towards an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution;

(f) Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools, including effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected marine protected areas, and other effective area-based conservation measures, integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning, through, *inter alia*, assessing their multiple ecological, socioeconomic and cultural value and applying the precautionary and ecosystem-based approach, in accordance with national legislation and international law;

(g) Developing and implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and avert, minimize and address loss and damage, reducing disaster risk and enhancing resilience, including through increasing the use of renewable energy technologies, especially ocean-based technologies, reducing the risk of and preparing for ocean-related extreme weather events, including the development of multi-hazard early warning systems and integrating ecosystem-based approaches for disaster risk reduction at all levels and across all phases of disaster risk reduction and management, and the impacts of sea level rise, reducing emissions from maritime transportation, including shipping, and implementing nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches for, *inter alia*, carbon sequestration and the prevention of coastal erosion.

14. We commit to taking the following science-based and innovative actions on an urgent basis, recognizing that developing countries, in particular small island developing States and the least developed countries, face capacity challenges that need to be addressed:

(a) Strengthen international, regional, subregional and national scientific and systematic observation and data collection efforts, including of environmental and socioeconomic data, especially in developing countries, and improve the timely sharing and dissemination of data and knowledge, including by making data widely accessible through open access databases, investing in national statistical systems, standardizing data, ensuring interoperability between databases, and synthesizing data into information for policymakers and decision makers, and support capacity-building in developing countries to improve data collection and analysis;

(b) Recognize the important role of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge, innovation and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the role of social science in planning, decision-making and implementation;

(c) Enhance cooperation at the global, regional, subregional, national and local levels in order to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing

and exchange of best practices within marine scientific research, including through South-South and triangular cooperation and to support developing countries in addressing their constraints in access to technology, including through strengthening science, technology and innovation infrastructure, domestic innovation capabilities, absorptive capacities and the capacity of national statistical systems, in particular in the most vulnerable countries, which face the greatest challenges in collecting, analysing and using reliable data and statistics;

(d) Establish effective partnerships, including multi-stakeholder, public-private, cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and scientific partnerships, including by incentivizing the sharing of good practices, giving visibility to well-performing partnerships and creating space for meaningful interaction and networking and capacity-building;

(e) Explore, develop and promote innovative financing solutions to drive the transformation to sustainable ocean-based economies, and the scaling up of nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches to support the resilience, restoration and conservation of coastal ecosystems, including through public-private sector partnerships and capital market instruments, provide technical assistance to enhance the bankability and feasibility of projects, as well as mainstream the values of marine natural capital into decision-making and address barriers to accessing financing, recognizing that further support is needed from developed countries, especially regarding capacity-building, financing and technology transfer;

(f) Empower women and girls, as their full, equal and meaningful participation is key in progressing towards a sustainable ocean-based economy and to achieving Goal 14, and mainstream a gender perspective in our work to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and its resources;

(g) Ensure that people, especially children and youth, are empowered with relevant knowledge and skills that enable them to understand the importance of and the need to contribute to the health of the ocean, including in decision-making, through promoting and supporting quality education and lifelong learning for ocean literacy;

(h) Strengthen the science-policy interface for implementing Goal 14 and its targets, to ensure that policy is informed by the best-available science and relevant indigenous, traditional and local knowledge, and to highlight policies and actions that may be scalable, through processes such as the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects;

(i) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from international maritime transportation, especially shipping, as soon as possible, acknowledging the leadership role of the International Maritime Organization, taking into account its initial strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships, looking forward to its upcoming review and noting the need to strengthen its ambitions in order to meet the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement, while setting clear interim goals, ensuring that investments in research and development and in new infrastructure such as ports and ships increase resilience in the face of climate impacts and leave no one behind, and noting that the impacts on Member States of a measure should be assessed and taken into account as appropriate before adoption of the measure, and particular attention should be paid to the needs of developing countries, especially small island developing States and the least developed countries.

15. We commit to implementing our respective voluntary commitments made in the context of the Conference and urge those who have made voluntary commitments at the 2017 Conference to ensure appropriate review and follow-up of their progress.

16. We strongly call upon the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support the implementation of Goal 14 in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by enhancing inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, through the work of UN-Oceans.

17. We know that restoring harmony with nature through a healthy, productive, sustainable and resilient ocean is critical for our planet, our lives and our future. We call upon all stakeholders to urgently take ambitious and concerted action to accelerate implementation to achieve Goal 14 as soon as possible without undue delay.

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