



Remarks

by

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu

Under-Secretary-General

High Representative

for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

and Small Island Developing States

at a side event organized by UN-Oceans

“Ocean in the 2030 Agenda: UN-Oceans harbouring SDG 14”

6:15 – 7:30 PM, Conference Room B
5 June 2017, New York

Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, and focal point for UN-Oceans,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank UN-Oceans for convening this side-event in the margins of the Ocean Conference.

At a time such as this, it is more important than ever for the entire UN system to reflect on how better to serve the Member States, and deliver more effectively and efficiently.

This is particularly the case for support to the countries in special situations which are the subject of my mandate -- the Least Developed Countries, the Landlocked Developing States and the Small Island Developing States. These countries face immense challenges from greater vulnerability, remoteness, small size and capacity gaps, to mention but a few.

UN-Oceans provides a critical platform for advancing inter-agency coordination and coherence on activities relating to oceans and coastal areas, a role which has become even more important following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

I would like to highlight two key aspects where UN-Oceans brings unique value added in the context of SDG14.

Firstly, achieving SDG14 within the time limits will require stepped-up support to Member States by all UN-Oceans members, as well as greater efficiency and effectiveness through enhanced interagency coordination and coherence. UN-Oceans can contribute to this by providing a forum where UN entities can exchange information on common challenges encountered by Member States in implementing SDG14 – for example data gaps, or the latest scientific knowledge and the policy interface – and develop joint activities on how to address them.

Secondly, the preparatory phase for the Ocean Conference highlighted the complexity of the challenges we face in implementing SDG14, the range of sectors concerned and the array of stakeholders that must be mobilized in order to support Member States. There are several key intergovernmental processes that are relevant to SDG14, taking place in different UN fora – whether on the Law of the Sea, climate change, biodiversity, fisheries, international trade or marine pollution. UN-Oceans brings together all the UN entities concerned by these processes around one table, allowing a holistic and integral vision of the challenges, fostering an understanding on the inter-linkages and synergies between these processes, and also identify areas where there may be potential conflict with other SDGs.

By way of conclusion, I would like to express my full support for the UN-Oceans Voluntary Commitment entitled “Raising awareness of relevant regulatory and policy frameworks and its members’ activities in support of their implementation, as a foundation for conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and their resources”. This commitment is fully in line with my Office’s objectives to support the countries in special situations, and I look forward partnering with other UN-Oceans members on the future coordinated briefings.

Thank you.

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