

**Seventeenth meeting of UN-Oceans  
26-28 March 2018  
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Paris**

**Summary report**

1. UN-Oceans held its seventeenth face-to-face meeting from 26-28 March 2018, at the kind invitation of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris. In accordance with the terms of reference of UN-Oceans, the meeting was convened and organized by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs (DOALOS/OLA).
2. The following representatives of UN-Oceans members participated in person in the meeting: Mr. Árni M. Mathiesen and Mr. Joseph Zelasney (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO); Mr. David Osborn (International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA); Mr. Brandt Wagner (International Labour Organization, ILO); Mr. Frederik Haag (International Maritime Organization, IMO); Mr. Vladimir Ryabinin, Mr. Julian Barbière, Mr. Thorkild Aarup, Mr. Salvatore Arico, Ms. Isabel Chavez, Mr. Albert Fisher, Ms. Julie Ricaud and Mr. Vincius Lindoso of IOC-UNESCO; Mr. Sandor Mulsow and Ms. Marie Bourrel-McKinnon (International Seabed Authority, ISA); Ms. Shifaana Thowfeequ (United Nations Office for the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UN-OHRLLS); Mr. Andrew Hudson (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP); Ms. Lisa Svensson (United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP); Ms. Ulrike Guerin, Mr. Arturo Rey da Silva and Mr. Chihiro Nishikawa (UNESCO, Culture Sector); Ms. Fanny Douvere and Ms. Vanessa Lucot (UNESCO, World Heritage Centre, Marine Programme); Ms. Zita Sebesvari and Mr. Tumi Tómasson (United Nations University, UNU); Mr. Wenjian Zhang, Mr. Stefano Belfiore and Ms. Sarah Grimes (World Meteorological Organization, WMO). DOALOS/OLA as convener of the meeting was represented by Ms. Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli. The following representatives participated by telephone in the meeting, either in full or part: Mr. Joseph Appiott (the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD Secretariat); Mr. Yoshinobu Takei (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, DESA); Mr. Dmitry Gonchar, Ms. Alice Hicuburundi, Ms. Stephanie Ierino and Ms. Lika Diouf (DOALOS/OLA); and Mr. Mike Sparrow (WMO).
3. The following representatives participated as guest speakers: Mr. Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, accompanied by Ms. Anthea Brooks; and Mr. Mish Hamid, Project Manager (IW: LEARN) and Ms. Natalie Degger, Capacity Development (IW: LEARN) and Ms. Ivica Trumbic, Project Manager (LME: LEARN).

### **Items 1 and 2. Opening of the meeting, welcome and opening remarks**

4. Ms. Goettsche-Wanli, Director, DOALOS/OLA, opened the meeting, welcomed the participants on behalf of the UN-Oceans Focal Point, Mr. Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, and thanked IOC-UNESCO for having offered to host the meeting of UN-Oceans at the headquarters of UNESCO. Mr. Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of IOC-UNESCO and Assistant Director General of UNESCO also welcomed the participants.

### **Item 3. Election of Chair**

5. In accordance with the terms of reference of UN-Oceans, Mr. Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of IOC-UNESCO and Assistant Director General of UNESCO, was elected Chair of the seventeenth meeting of UN-Oceans.

### **Item 4. Adoption of the draft agenda**

6. The Chair recalled that a draft agenda had been sent to all members for their comments and suggestions were received from some members as reflected in the draft agenda (e.g. proposal for an interactive session with the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Decade for Ocean Science, and presentation from LME: LEARN).
7. The draft agenda was then adopted without amendments, as follows:
  1. Opening
  2. Welcome and opening remarks
  3. Election of Chair
  4. Adoption of the draft agenda
  5. SDG 14 and follow-up to the Ocean Conference
    - UN-Oceans Voluntary Commitment
    - Communities of Ocean Action
    - Methodology for indicator 14.c.1
  6. United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)
  7. Review of UN-Oceans terms of reference by the General Assembly
    - Preparation of a background note
  8. UN-Oceans Inventory of member organizations' activities and mandates
    - Identification of synergies and areas of collaboration
  9. Activities or events of interest for possible collaboration among members
  10. UN-Oceans website
  11. UN-Oceans Work Programme for 2018
  12. Exchange of information
  13. Wrap up and closure of the meeting
    - Review of action-points
    - Other matters

8. UN-Oceans members also approved a draft organization of work for the meeting. The Chair noted that agenda items may be advanced or delayed depending on how the discussions proceed.

#### **Item 5. SDG 14 and follow-up to the Ocean Conference**

##### *Interactive dialogue with the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy for the Ocean*

9. Upon the invitation of the Chair, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Mr. Peter Thomson, addressed UN-Oceans and provided an update of developments that had taken place since 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 (the Ocean Conference) and review of SDG 14 by the High Level Political Forum in July 2017. He recalled the outcomes of the Ocean Conference and noted that nine Communities of Ocean Action (COA) had been established and new Voluntary Commitments were being received. He suggested that UN-Oceans might wish to take advantage of the COA newsletter to convey the work it was doing in implementing SDG 14. He recalled the last paragraph of the "Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action".
10. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean further noted that the Friends of Ocean Action was launched by Isabella Lövin, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, and him on 25 January 2018 at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos and that a meeting of the Friends of Ocean Action would take place in Monaco in two weeks' time.
11. The Chair thanked the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean for his remarks and opened the floor for comments and questions.
12. In response to a question on how to maintain the high level of public engagement following the Ocean Conference, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean underlined the need for UN-Oceans to be aware of the importance of public awareness and outreach, including in relation to its own activities.
13. In response to a question on how UN-Oceans could support the implementation of SDG 14 as a group, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean indicated that of the 10 targets of SDG 14, most of the United Nations system was involved in marine pollution. He also urged involvement in the Communities of Ocean Action (COAs). The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean referred to paragraph 12 of the Terms of Reference of UN-Oceans which he pointed out enabled UN-Oceans to set up time-bound ad hoc assignments to facilitate coordination on specific issues, open to all participating organizations of UN-Oceans. He considered that UN-Oceans members could take advantage of paragraph 12 of the Terms of Reference of UN-Oceans to cooperate bilaterally or within small groups on

specific issues and without necessarily involving the full UN-Oceans membership.

14. Several members of UN-Oceans considered that as a group UN-Oceans could focus on “source-to-sea”, in particular land-based activities and work with UN-Water in that regard. A suggestion was made to organize a joint event with UN-Water in the future. One member suggested also working with a country that would be interested in championing the issue, for example Indonesia.
15. The Chair thanked Mr. Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean for his presentation and closed the interactive dialogue session.

#### *UN-Oceans Voluntary Commitment*

16. Upon the invitation of the Chair, DOALOS/OLA introduced this item. It recalled that UN-Oceans registered a commitment at the Ocean Conference which calls for “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”. UN-Oceans members committed to provide information on ocean-related international regulatory and policy frameworks to the widest number of stakeholders also to ensure that they are aware of the legal instruments and policy outcomes which are relevant to SDG 14 and other ocean-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. They will also inform about the available opportunities to increase the capacity to implement relevant instruments and commitments more effectively and fully. Specifically, at major intergovernmental meetings, UN-Oceans members committed to come together to provide briefings which could for instance take the form of workshops or dialogues in the margins of international meetings, conferences of the parties or at relevant regional events.
17. DOALOS/OLA noted the need to be able to report on the implementation of the voluntary commitment including through relevant reports of the Secretary-General and within the context of the Community of Ocean Action on implementation of international law as reflected in UNCLOS. It requested UN-Oceans members to confirm their commitment to organize an event during the conferences and meetings mentioned by UN-Oceans members during the last teleconference, a preliminary list of which had been circulated by DOALOS/OLA for comments.
18. UN-Oceans members identified the conferences and meetings which they considered appropriate for the implementation of the voluntary commitment and the UN-Oceans member responsible for organizing the event. A list of those conferences and meetings is set out in annex I.

19. With regard to the side event during the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), several members of UN-Oceans suggested focussing the discussions on ocean science for sustainable fisheries. ILO also highlighted the labour aspects.
20. With respect to a side event at United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, WMO proposed presenting an ocean-focused extract of the WMO Statement on the state of the global climate, prepared with the input of UN-Oceans members. IOC-UNESCO indicated that another ocean action day was also expected to be held at UNFCCC. WMO indicated that it would be available to co-coordinate the preparation of the UN-Oceans side event pending verification with the UNFCCC Secretariat of an adequate time slot.
21. UN-OHRLS recalled the United Nations System Implementation Matrix for the SAMOA Pathway (paras. 53-57) and proposed that the side event to be held at the Inter-regional meeting could provide an opportunity to provide an update regarding action taken in support of implementation. It would also consult with colleagues from DESA on this.

#### *Communities of Ocean Action*

22. Upon the invitation of the Chair, DESA introduced this agenda item. It recalled that nine Communities of Ocean Action were established in November last year with two focal points for each COA. Working level staff (“Sherpas”) had also been designated for each focal point, who were responsible for the day-to-day work of the COAs. On 21 February, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean held a webinar on how to proceed with the COAs. Some COAs are more active and others are discussing how to cooperate. The COA on the blue economy will hold a webinar on 29 March. Participation in the COAs was open to anyone that had registered a voluntary commitment.
23. In response to a question as to how the focal points were assigned and whether others could join as focal points, DESA explained that two focal points had been designated based on the expertise of the focal point in question and there were no plans to increase that number. It was up to the focal points to decide how best to proceed regarding inviting key stakeholders to participate in the COA. DESA also noted that many voluntary commitments were cross-cutting and some also covered SDGs other than SDG 14. Focal points were encouraged to invite members from other COAs to participate. DESA was still discussing how to do an interim assessment at the end of the year and was preparing a template to be shared. The focal points of the COAs have received raw data for each COA.
24. The Chair indicated that IOC-UNESCO and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) agreed that they would have a professional analysis of all the commitments made under the COA on Scientific Knowledge, Research Capacity Development and Transfer of Marine Technology.

25. ISA, which along with OLA is the focal point for one of the COAs, raised questions regarding the review and monitoring of the commitments and whether there is a process to guide focal points on how they could report back. The need for a common methodology for the sharing of data was underscored. ISA suggested that DESA prepare a note on what resources they can provide to focal points. ISA noted that due to resource constraints, it will not be able to do everything that is required under the terms of reference of COAs, notwithstanding the cooperation with DOALOS/OLA.
26. DESA acknowledged the difficulty in assessing progress but indicated that the template for reporting on progress of the COA which DESA was preparing was intended to help focal points to conduct an assessment in a more consistent way across the COAs and to allow comparison. The template will include a series of questions that focal points will be required to answer, including identification of gaps and necessary future actions. DESA was still in the process of considering the exact content of the template and was still receiving feedback. Regarding resources, DESA noted that some organizations had already appointed working level staff, but recognized that not every organization can do the same. Some focal points had hired consultants to do an assessment. The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean had suggested fully utilizing the expertise of members of the COAs. Also, there were resources available on the Ocean Conference website, including a register of all voluntary commitments, and an analysis of the voluntary commitments for implementation of SDG 14 had been prepared.
27. The Chair indicated that UN-Oceans took note of the information provided by DESA and requested that the interim assessment template be shared as soon as possible to enable the focal points of the COAs to provide their feedback. It was noted that the information received through the review could be used to develop activities, and could be a building block for the Decade. All focal points were urged to work with members of the COAs.

*Methodology for indicator 14.c.1*

28. The Chair noted that comments on the revised template developed by FAO for monitoring progress in the implementation of target 14.c on the basis of the indicator of achievement had been submitted by DOALOS/OLA and UNESCO (Culture Sector). The Chair invited DOALOS/OLA as focal point for the indicator to present the agenda item.
29. DOALOS/OLA recalled that UN-Oceans had agreed on a single indicator of achievement for target 14.c, namely "Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources", which was thereafter submitted to the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and approved for inclusion in the Global Indicator Framework.

Since the target was new, the new indicator needed a methodology that would need to be approved by the IAEG-SDGs. As of now the indicator for 14.c is a Tier III indicator with no approved methodology. The objective of this meeting of UN-Oceans was to agree generally on a methodology for 14.c.1 which could then be further developed and communicated to the IAEG-SDGs in order to enable the reclassification of the Indicator to Tier II and eventually to Tier I. DOALOS/OLA recalled that following a proposal by FAO, UN-Oceans had agreed on the development of a questionnaire as the best means for compiling the necessary data and information on progress relating to the implementation of target 14.c. Once the methodology has been agreed by UN-Oceans members and a pilot data collection/testing phase has been conducted, a request for tier reclassification of indicator 14.c.1 will need to be submitted one month in advance of the relevant IAEG-SDGs meeting. The following supporting evidence/documentation would be required: a request summary (one to two pages in length); draft metadata and a full methodology development narrative (including a list of pilot countries, data and the results emanating from the pilot studies); and any other relevant material.

30. FAO and IOC-UNESCO underscored the importance of the methodology for the indicator being approved by a governing body prior to its submission to the IAEG-SDGs. IOC-UNESCO indicated that the approval of the reclassification of the indicator of achievement for target 14.a from tier III to tier II was also contingent upon IOC-UNESCO demonstrating that it had collected data for a sample of countries, which in IOC-UNESCO's case was effected for 25 countries through the Global Ocean Science Report.
31. DOALOS/OLA and UNESCO (Culture Sector) presented their comments on the revised template prepared by FAO that had also been circulated in writing.
32. Following an extensive exchange of views on the methodology, members of UN-Oceans agreed to proceed on the basis of a simplified questionnaire/survey which would be conducted using a web-based data system. UNCLOS and other relevant legal instruments (binding and non-binding) would be listed and States would be asked to answer the following questions with respect to each legal instrument: whether they are a party to the instrument in question; whether they have codified the instrument in question through national legislation; and whether they have adopted a national policy and/or a national institutional mechanism based on the instrument in question. An option would also be provided to indicate that implementation of the instrument in question has been effected partially.
33. A list of all directly relevant ocean-related global and regional binding instruments developed within the United Nations system bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies and the International Seabed Authority, as identified by UN-Oceans members, and all relevant non-binding instruments mentioned in the General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries would be included in the questionnaire for States' consideration.

34. The questionnaire would also draw attention to relevant information previously submitted by States to UN-Oceans members concerning ratification/accession and implementation of relevant instruments. The name of the entity concerned and a link to the relevant entity's URL or URLs would be placed next to the instrument.
35. If the web-based data system approach described above is adopted, then a note verbale would be sent to States (directed to the Permanent and Observer Missions) which would outline the background to and objective of the questionnaire, and provide log in details to the website. The introductory text would emphasize that the list of instruments included is an indicative list only. It would also specify that only directly relevant ocean-related global and regional binding instruments developed within the United Nations System bodies, funds, programmes and specialized agencies as well as the International Seabed Authority, and ocean-related non-binding instruments mentioned in the General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries are included.
36. This proposed methodology could be presented and discussed by States at the Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea during a side event. It could also be presented at the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea in the context of the statement by the UN-Oceans Focal Point.
37. States would enter their own responses directly into the database. A box would be included which would enable States to identify their capacity-building priority needs, if applicable.
38. With respect to measurement of progress in ratifications/accessions and implementation, UN-Oceans members agreed that there should not be a score for individual countries, but rather that the analysis of the results would show overall trends/progress. Therefore, no 'points' or 'scores' would be attributed to States' answers entered in the database and as such, there would be no weighing of scores for ratification/accession and implementation.
39. With regard to the periodicity of the questionnaire, it was suggested that 2015 was the baseline that could be used. It was suggested that the reporting could be effected every two or three years and that it needed to be in line with the 2030 deadline. DOALOS/OLA was requested to seek the advice of the Statistical Division as to the approach of other indicators with respect to periodicity.
40. DOALOS/OLA was also requested to circulate the current consolidated list of binding instruments that had been identified by members of UN-Oceans so that UN-Oceans' members could update/supplement that list. A list of binding instruments previously identified by UN-Oceans members is at annex II to this report. DOALOS/OLA would prepare the list of non-binding instruments on the

basis of the General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries.

41. With respect to DOALOS/OLA's proposal to include a free text option for States to input where/how they implemented the instrument similar to the approach used for one of the migration indicators that relate to implementation of law, UN-Oceans members requested more details regarding the approach used. DOALOS/OLA agreed to further explore this option and provide additional information to UN-OCEANS members.
42. DOALOS/OLA will investigate whether it has access to the technical capabilities to establish and maintain a web-based data system (and whether such a system would be affordable). DOALOS/OLA indicated that it would need the cooperation of all UN-Oceans members in preparing an assessment of the results of the questionnaire.

Action points:

- DOALOS/OLA to seek advice of the Statistical Division with respect to periodicity, and as to whether it is possible/appropriate to measure progress against the indicator prior to adoption of the methodology.
- DOALOS/OLA to investigate the feasibility of establishing and hosting a web-based data system.
- DOALOS/OLA to prepare a list of binding and non-binding instruments on the basis of the General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries and to circulate the list to members of UN-Oceans.

**Item 6. United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)**

43. The Chair recalled the decision of the UN General Assembly through resolution 72/73 to proclaim the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and to request IOC-UNESCO to lead the preparation of an implementation plan for the Decade to be finalized by 2020. He stressed the fact that the resolution invites UN-Oceans and its members to collaborate with IOC-UNESCO in the preparation of the Decade, and therefore urged all UN partners to work closely with the IOC-UNESCO Secretariat in developing meaningful activities that can benefit the United Nations System as a whole in its support for the 2030 Agenda. He gave an overview of the main activities to be implemented during the preparation phase, building on the Roadmap document prepared by IOC-UNESCO and shared with UN-Oceans. IOC-UNESCO as the lead agency will coordinate these preparatory activities, building on its governing bodies and programmatic networks to develop a coalition of partners who can deliver on the Decade objectives. The activity will aim to establish a governance mechanism as well a durable structure and a delivery mechanism for implementing Decade activities from 2021 to 2030. Based on an exhaustive consultation process implemented across the scientific community, Member

States, UN and international partners, key research priorities will be identified. A framework for partnership will also be developed and operationalized, ensuring that ocean science and observations support the implementation of the ocean-related aspects of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda as well as other relevant United Nations frameworks related to ocean sustainability.

44. IOC-UNESCO recalled the guiding questions sent to the UN-Oceans members:
- *What key ocean science requirements (including access to data and capacity development) do you have as an organization, which are needed to deliver on your institutional mandate, esp. in relation to SDG implementation?*
  - *How could the Decade help your organization in meeting its science agenda? (in terms of possible objectives, activities, partnerships, outcomes)*
  - *What kind of contribution could your organization make to the preparation phase? (e.g. in terms of coordination, communication, assessing needs/gap analysis, etc.)?*
  - *How can you / IOC-UNESCO (as coordinator) help to engage stakeholders in the Decade within your constituency/ sector/ governing body?*
  - *What role could UN-Oceans play in the context of the Decade?*
  - *Any additional inputs on the roadmap?*

IOC-UNESCO invited UN-Oceans members to share their vision for the Decade, to elaborate their possible contributions to the Preparatory and Planning Process and their expectations regarding their own programmes and objectives.

45. UN-Oceans members expressed support and interest in contributing to the Decade and congratulated IOC-UNESCO for its mandate and preparatory work, in particular the Roadmap for the Decade.
46. UNU outlined the list of potential breakthroughs of the Decade, which should be solution-oriented (e.g. Marine Pollution), and stressed that the Decade should enable actions and support ocean management. UNU proposed more synergies between research and capacity-development.
47. UNESCO (Culture Sector) suggested providing guidance to direct UN-Oceans members' contributions. UNESCO also proposed to orient ocean science to help decision-makers. UNESCO recommended the Decade should focus on delivering multiple breakthroughs such as a new dimension to science (popularize science), using technologies to monitor or setting standards.
48. WMO highlighted the need to communicate on sustainable development as the overall objective of this Decade, ocean science representing a tool to achieve this objective. WMO stressed the need to promote ocean observations and to explain how investment in observations will generate socio- economic benefits. WMO proposed to demonstrate to Member States how ocean science could provide support to their oceans management issues and bring economic benefits.

49. IAEA stated that data sharing amongst nations is still a challenge that makes the implementation of sustainable development at the ecosystem level complicated. IAEA suggested identifying how the Decade could contribute to peace and diplomacy in fostering cooperation amongst nations in areas where ocean conflicts are occurring. IAEA recalled that its work is primarily focussed on science and technical cooperation, as well as technical capacity development, and suggested that IAEA programmes could provide a conduit for developing research areas identified by the Decade. IAEA also proposed that the Decade focus on transitioning from observations to forecasting services, considering that managers need to take decisions reflecting this transition (e.g. with aquaculture investments in relation to ocean acidification trends).
50. FAO noted that the Decade represents an opportunity for UN bodies to advance not only collectively but also individually towards sustainable development. FAO outlined the key area of FAO focus for the Decade: fisheries science for promoting sustainable development and ensuring food security. FAO highlighted a few areas where the Decade could assist FAO to deliver its mandate on fisheries management and food security: these relate to improving data for conducting stock assessments, developing assessment guidelines and tools, supporting the establishment of ocean science-policy dialogue, and developing ocean forecasts for the development of aquaculture. FAO also suggested emphasizing the food production aspect in the presentation of the Decade recalling insecurity related to food and nutrition and migration affecting coastal communities. FAO highlighted land-based pollution issue and the role of ocean in climate change as important issues. FAO highlighted the need to mobilize resources for the Decade which otherwise may not function. FAO proposed to dedicate a specific item on the Decade at the upcoming COFI, in July as well as at the meeting of the Seventh Regular Fishery Body Secretariat's Network.
51. UN-OHRLLS acknowledged the focus of the Decade of Ocean Science on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. UN-OHRLLS recalled that the ocean is a key resource for SIDS and highlighted the difficulty in using and protecting resources without sufficient scientific knowledge. UN-OHRLLS expressed some expectations for the Decade, such as increasing capacity for SIDS, harmonizing and providing access to relevant ocean data.
52. IMO recalled that its mandate is regulatory and that it has no other in-house scientific expertise (except for the London Protocol). IMO relies on GESAMP and strives to ensure that its regulatory work is based on the best available science. IMO invited IOC-UNESCO to present the Decade activities to GESAMP and IMO's technical bodies (Marine Environment Protection Committee and the scientific group advising the London Protocol). IMO encouraged IOC-UNESCO to identify the Decade priorities, focus areas, efforts to result in a lasting impact to help policy making-bodies. IMO called for Member States in other UN constituencies than IOC-UNESCO to be informed about the Decade.

53. WMO presented its ocean activities and priorities and identified three areas for improvement: forecasting of extreme events, sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasting and multi-decadal monitoring. WMO informed the meeting that its Executive Council would endorse the Decade in June 2018. WMO also explained that three of the Strategic Objectives defined in WMO Draft Strategic Plan are relevant for the Decade: knowledge of the ocean system, ocean-related hazards and cooperation in observation. In this regard, WMO is preparing a “catalogue” of all its activities that contribute to the objectives of the Decade, which will be shared with UN-Oceans members.
54. ISA acknowledged that the Decade would be instrumental in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals if it succeeds in avoiding duplication. At the same time, it will create synergies. The Decade will also play an important role for ISA in implementing its mandate under UNCLOS, especially in relation to Marine Scientific Research in the Area, the collection and dissemination of information, and the protection of the marine environment from seabed activities. ISA noted that critical aspects of the Decade would be around its capacity to include developing States and to facilitate their participation in data management. ISA informed the meeting that it has elaborated a database (at phase 7 out of 9) which will be shared with several levels of access: general public, contractors and international expert working group. ISA generated two atlases on macro-fauna and meio-fauna registered as voluntary commitments.
55. IOC-UNESCO informed the meeting that, in addition to its coordinating role, it will also contribute to identifying key ocean science requirements for the Decade, building on its existing programmes in ocean sciences, observation, services and capacity development. A paper will be submitted to the IOC-UNESCO Executive Council in July that will identify IOC-UNESCO preliminary contribution to the Decade.
56. DOALOS/OLA underlined the critical importance of marine science for the implementation of UNCLOS and UNFSA, as well as for the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process). It underlined that knowledge and capacity gaps had been identified by the First World Ocean Assessment. DOALOS/OLA recalled relevant General Assembly resolutions which emphasize the need to strengthen the ability of competent international organizations to contribute to the development of national capacity in marine science and the sustainable management of the oceans and their resources. DOALOS/OLA highlighted its joint capacity-building project with IOC-UNESCO, which has a particular focus on training of SIDS. DOALOS/OLA also proposed incorporating gender perspectives into the Decade process, and noted that UN-Oceans side events could be used as an opportunity to draw the attention of Member States to the Decade. Reference was made to the upcoming informal consultations of States parties to UNFSA, which will have as its theme the science/policy interface, meetings of the Regular Process and the first session 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 (BBNJ) in September. DOALOS/OLA also clarified that progress on the Decade would be reported through the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea.

57. UNDP provided an overview of the GEF funded programs in the context of the International Water strategy that generally promote a 'science to management' approach. UNDP recalled that GEF does not finance science per se but suggested promoting Decade-related commitments on science, as part of GEF project partnerships.
58. Mr. Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, shared his vision for the Decade and recalled that the objective of the Decade would be that at the end of these ten years we would know more about the state of ocean, but also that science would be accessible to everyone through seamless access to relevant data and information, in an understandable format.
59. UN-Oceans members were invited to send additional written inputs on the Roadmap document and outline their potential contributions, to the IOC-UNESCO Secretariat by 27 April 2018 at the latest. A revised version of the Roadmap will be presented at the IOC-UNESCO Executive Council and shared with UN-Oceans members.
60. The Chair concluded that the Preparatory Phase needs to focus on resource mobilization and requires robust coordination arrangements to engage all stakeholders, UN and non-UN partners. The Preparatory Phase will refine specific outcomes for the Decade with inputs from UN-Oceans and its members. The Preparatory Phase will support both the development of a Science and Business Plan and elaborate a data policy for the Decade, whilst ensuring that capacity development is embedded across all themes of the Decade. The Chair called upon UN-Oceans members to reach out to their Member States, to inform them about the Decade and to invite them to contribute. The Chair recalled the Decade would be co-designed and it would share unified data and information about the ocean. It will create an open, accessible database. The Chair also concluded that the Decade would offer science solutions to policy decisions (acting on data information to management), to empower decision-makers.
61. The IOC-UNESCO Secretariat recalled that IOC-UNESCO Executive Council would consider the Terms of Reference for the Planning Group in July and that UN-Oceans members will be invited to recommend experts representing their respective areas of work, as well as to nominate representatives for the regional workshops, which will take place in 2019, for the five major ocean basins. IOC-UNESCO Secretariat also reminded UN-Oceans members that

contributions to the Roadmap would be welcome until 15 April 2018. UN-Oceans members were also invited to inform the IOC-UNESCO Secretariat of their communication needs (communication materials are to be developed and shared with agencies) as well as opportunities to engage the different communities.

Action point: UN-Oceans members to send additional written inputs on the Roadmap document and outline their potential contributions to the IOC-UNESCO Secretariat by 27 April 2018. UN-Oceans members to inform the IOC-UNESCO Secretariat of their communication needs (communication materials are to be developed by the IOC-UNESCO and shared with agencies) as well as opportunities to engage the different communities.

#### **Item 7. Review of UN-Oceans' Terms of Reference by the General Assembly**

62. DOALOS/OLA introduced this agenda item by providing information regarding the decision of the General Assembly to defer the review of the Terms of Reference (TORs) of UN-Oceans until its seventy-third session and fact that Member States welcomed the suggestion by DOALOS/OLA for UN-Oceans to prepare an informal document to facilitate the review by Member States. DOALOS/OLA proposed that such informal document could be finalized in time for the meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea to be held from 18-22 June 2018, when the Focal Point for UN-Oceans traditionally presents an overview of the activities of UN-Oceans to Member States.
63. An extensive exchange of views among members of UN-Oceans followed during which members expressed the view that UN-Oceans should prepare an informal document for submission to Member States. It was agreed that UN-Oceans would not propose modifications to the TORs since that was the prerogative of Member States. Instead UN-Oceans would focus on highlighting the value of working together, for example that there is a need for a mechanism to help United Nations system organizations, bodies, funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies and ISA, consider how UN-Oceans can work together and pool resources and provide examples of what has been achieved to date through UN-Oceans, including in relation to the inventory of mandates and the preparations for the Ocean Conference.
64. Examples of future activities, in particular the UN Decade of Ocean Science, would also be provided. In that regard, ILO also referred to the potential involvement of UN-Oceans in the preparation of the ILO/FAO/IMO roadmap on working conditions in fisheries. DOALOS/OLA highlighted the Regular Process as another activity which required the collaboration and support of UN-Oceans (see also item 9 below).
65. It was noted that UN-Oceans should explore what it could further effectively achieve within the existing TORs. However, UN-Oceans members also considered it important to underscore in the informal document that when the

TORs were approved by Member States, the 2030 Agenda had not been adopted by the General Assembly, nor had the “Our ocean, our future: call for action” been endorsed by the General Assembly, noting the potential changed expectations of Member States regarding the work of UN-Oceans, and to highlight developments that had taken place since that time. It was proposed that UN-Oceans could suggest to Member States to add a reference to the 2030 Agenda in the TORs. It was also suggested that the case for a UN-Oceans mechanism could be reiterated, while also underlining the need for Member States to clearly indicate what they expected from UN-Oceans. It was noted that it was critical to know what the added value of UN-Oceans was when deciding whether to attend a meeting. It was also suggested by a member that the informal document should touch upon the difference between UN-Oceans and UN-Water.

66. The UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean reiterated his proposal to use paragraph 12 of the TORs to set up time-bound ad hoc assignments to facilitate coordination on specific issues among some members of UN-Oceans which could then be reported as examples of collaboration to Member States. While this proposal was supported by some members of UN-Oceans, it was pointed out that such collaboration was already happening extensively outside the framework of UN-Oceans and that the purpose of paragraph 12 had been to provide for such collaboration within the framework of UN-Oceans enabling all interested members to eventually provide their input if they wished to do so. It was noted that UN-Oceans needed to give itself some guidance as to when an output becomes an UN-Oceans output.
67. It was agreed that IAEA and DOALOS/OLA would prepare the first draft of the informal document and then circulate it for comments to all UN-Oceans members. The document would then be presented to the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.
68. It was also proposed to take advantage of the momentum that the Ocean Conference had generated to have broader recognition of the work of UN-Oceans. In that regard, it was agreed to work on improving the website of UN-Oceans (see below 87-92). The suggestion was also made that the website should provide for the possibility for UN-Oceans members to have a central place to access and share working documents.

Action point: DOALOS/OLA and IAEA to prepare the draft informal document for submission to Member States and circulate to UN-Oceans members for comments.

#### **Item 8. UN-Oceans inventory of member organizations’ activities and mandates**

69. Upon the invitation of the Chair, DOALOS/OLA was invited to introduce this agenda item.

70. DOALOS/OLA recalled that the development of the inventory was one of the main achievements of UN-Oceans which is referred to in the General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea. It also underlined the importance for all members if they had not yet done so to input their information in the inventory or continue to update information in the inventory. In addition, DOALOS/OLA highlighted the importance of fulfilling the mandate as per the TORs of UN-Oceans and its past adopted Work Programme. DOALOS/OLA noted that some members had already been identifying synergies and were collaborating accordingly. These kind of collaboration agreements could qualify as identification of synergies and could be reflected in the inventory or alternatively, they could also be included on the UN-Oceans website. The views of members on this issue were sought.
71. Some members of UN-Oceans requested information on who was using the inventory and how the information was being used. FAO indicated that it would check regarding the number of persons accessing the inventory. Some members indicated that the inventory did not provide an appropriate tool for them to identify synergies. They considered it rather as a tool that could assist Member States in being aware of what members of UN-Oceans are doing. It was suggested that Member States should be invited to provide their feedback on the utility of the inventory through a survey to be distributed at the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. It was pointed by several members of UN-Oceans that more effort needed to be made to draw attention to the website of UN-Oceans which required improvements in terms of content and look (see agenda item 10).

Action point: DOALOS/OLA to prepare a draft survey, seeking Member States' views on the utility of the inventory, and circulate to UN-Oceans members for comments. FAO will provide statistics and other information as necessary on the use of the inventory.

#### **Item 9. Activities or events of interest for possible collaboration among members**

*IW: LEARN and LME: LEARN*

72. Upon the invitation of the Chair, UNDP introduced this agenda item and the guest speakers on IW: LME:LEARN, Mr. Mish Hamid, Project Manager, and Ms. Natalie Degger, Capacity Development; as well as the guest speaker on LME: LEARN, Ms. Ivica Trubic, Project Manager.
73. The presenters underscored how the LME: LEARN approach is aimed at improving global ecosystem-based governance of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) and their coasts through generating knowledge, building capacity, public-private partnerships, and South-South/North-South learning. It provided a regional framework for achieving SDG 14. LME: LEARN's website <marine.iwlearn.net> provides detailed information. A large LME hub led by IUCN is part of the project and is available at <[www.lmehub.net](http://www.lmehub.net)>, while a

database of ocean experts led by IOC-UNESCO Project Office for IODE is available at <[www.oceanexpert.net](http://www.oceanexpert.net)>.

74. Capacity-building activities included regional training with priorities for September 2018 to January 2019 focussed on governance, economic valuation and marine spatial planning in transboundary settings; an LME ecosystem course; massive open online courses; twinning; and regional networks and inter-project collaboration opportunities.
75. A conference was held in Cape Town from 27-28 November 2017 focussed on building international partnerships to enhance science-based ecosystem approaches in support of regional ocean governance. The goal was to enhance governance in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through enhanced collaboration between LMEs, regional seas programmes and regional fisheries bodies. The meeting reviewed numerous instruments and mechanisms for ocean governance implemented by various regional organizations and highlighted the role of science as the best collaborative point to establish connectivity. The participating organizations underlined that importance of retaining the current mandates of regional bodies.
76. LME: LEARN is willing to assist in building an information-sharing platform – a regional meta-database. To that end, a common structure for the platform needs to be developed, a specific website established and the current mechanism and tools needed to be utilized.
77. In response to questions raised by ISA and WMO, the speakers clarified that LME: LEARN encompassed not only the land/coastal interface, but also focussed on the coastal zone, including on marine protected areas and marine spatial planning. Climate variability was also part of some of the LME projects. Noting the focus on science and regional cooperation, DOALOS/OLA underlined the importance of also linking regional processes with global processes and policy developments, including the Regular Process and the BBNJ process. UNEP drew attention to the fact that the Regional Seas also developed their own policy.
78. IOC-UNESCO pointed out that LMEs were a good way of involving UN-Oceans partners. The speakers indicated that they were working with FAO on the Common Oceans Project but had not yet made the link to the Regular Process.
79. The Chair in thanking UNDP and the speakers for their presentations, emphasized the need to strengthen the linkage to the Regular Process.

#### *World Oceans Day Portal*

80. Upon the invitation of the Chair, IOC-UNESCO made a presentation on the World Oceans Day Portal which had been developed by IOC-UNESCO and DOALOS/OLA. UN-Oceans members were encouraged to register and input their events and resources on the site. IOC-UNESCO pointed out that the sooner content was put up on the website the more visible it became.

81. Upon the invitation of the Chair, DOALOS/OLA provided a brief update on preparations for World Oceans Day 2018. DOALOS/OLA indicated that in line with the theme of “Clean our Ocean”, a panel discussion was preliminarily planned for the afternoon of 8 June at UN Headquarters, with a particular focus on innovation and youth mobilization. Following that event, the annual World Oceans Day reception would be held, during which, inter alia, the World Oceans Day Photo Contest winners would be announced. The UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean and the UN-Oceans Focal Point would also be participating in World Oceans Day. Expressions of interest for involvement in World Oceans Day had also been received from some UN-Oceans members (UNDP, UNEP and IOC-UNESCO), as noted at previous meetings of the Friends of World Oceans Day. Other members that are interested in contributing are encouraged to contact DOALOS/OLA (Francois Bailet and Stefan Kuuskne) so that they can be added to the Friends of World Oceans Day meeting list and participate in future meetings.
82. In the exchange of views that followed, UNEP, supported by IAEA, suggested to have a UN-Oceans event. IMO, supported by DOALOS/OLA and FAO, proposed to develop and show a video on UN-Oceans at that event. While it was recognized that it was too late this year to coordinate an input by UN-Oceans to the World Oceans Day, it was suggested by IOC-UNESCO that the activities of each member of UN-Oceans could be posted on the Portal which could be updated every year. WMO suggested looking at the experience of UN-Water. Going forward, it was agreed by UN-Oceans that it would organize a collaborative event and consider developing a video with the support of members of UN-Oceans. It also agreed that it was important to have an input on the theme of World Oceans Day well in advance. As regards the theme for 2019, UN-Oceans agreed with the proposal by DOALOS/OLA, supported by ILO and WMO, that it should be a gender-related theme. ILO pointed out that the theme was opportune given the major meetings related to gender planned by ILO next year.
83. FAO informed UN-Oceans that it was planning an event to commemorate the International day for the fight against IUU fishing on 5 June and that members of UN-Oceans were welcome to connect to that event.
84. The Chair opened the floor for UN-Oceans members to present other activities or events of interest for possible collaboration among members.
85. DOALOS/OLA provided an overview of recent developments relating to the implementation of the second cycle of the Regular Process and highlighted the importance of the support of UN-Oceans members to the success of the Process, including in relation to the identification of experts to the Pool of Experts, as also recognized by the General Assembly in its resolution on oceans and the law of the sea. DOALOS/OLA also thanked those members that had already submitted a list of experts and that had contributed to the first round of regional workshops. It invited UN-Oceans members to participate in the second

round of regional workshops to be held this year, including by hosting or co-hosting workshops. DOALOS/OLA also informed UN-Oceans that a multi-stakeholder dialogue and capacity-building partnership event were scheduled to be held in early 2019.

86. WMO indicated that it had already submitted a list of experts that it had identified for the Pool of Experts, while IOC-UNESCO indicated that it was in process of compiling a list of experts. IOC-UNESCO and WMO both expressed an interest in co-organizing a workshop. IOC-UNESCO indicated that with the approval of the outline, it was now possible for the agencies to have a dialogue with the Group of Experts with a view to helping the Experts have access to resources. IOC-UNESCO and IAEA indicated that capacity-building provided a good opportunity for UN-Oceans members to collaborate. IAEA offered to support such capacity-development including financially.

#### **Item 10. UN-Oceans website**

87. Upon the invitation of the Chair, DOALOS/OLA introduced the agenda item. It recalled that UN-Oceans members had previously agreed that the UN-Oceans website needed updating, noting that the first set of updates was implemented by FAO prior to the Ocean Conference. A document containing a second set of proposed updates based on comments by the membership was circulated to UN-Oceans members for further contributions and comments. DOALOS/OLA expressed its appreciation to FAO, who has indicated that it will continue to be able to host the UN-Oceans website and cover the cost of the changes already proposed in the document circulated by DOALOS/OLA. DOALOS/OLA also thanked UNESCO (Culture Sector) for its comments on the website and its kind offer to assist in the update of the website. DOALOS/OLA noted that some changes to the structure of the website could be desirable to enhance its user friendliness and that other proposed changes include regular updates to the events calendar, and suggested that a procedure be established so members can provide this information on a rolling basis. It also presented the idea of a “learning” or “resources” section, compiling information about the various learning opportunities provided by members, for example in the form of links to their respective pages.
88. Upon the invitation of the Chair, UNESCO (Culture Sector) presented its comments on the UN-Oceans website emphasizing the need to make the website more visually appealing, including by adding photos.
89. With respect to the compilation of UN-Oceans events, several members suggested using electronic tools. FAO noted that its new corporate website has a mobile platform that may come with that functionality. ISA noted that consideration could also be given to developing an app through which it would be possible to send alerts in advance of UN-Oceans events and meetings.
90. Several members of UN-Oceans agreed that more effort needed to be made to improve and make the website more visually appealing, including through the

posting of photos. It was suggested that the task be delegated to a communications officer. FAO indicated that it would check what could be done to improve the website which it was pleased to host. It agreed that the website was dated due to its location on the legacy websites of the technical offices of FAO.

91. With regard to content, members of UN-Oceans suggested adding a new section/tab in the website on SDG 14. IAEA also suggested including a message about SDG 14 by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean.
92. The Chair summarized the next steps as follows: FAO would inform UN-Oceans as to what could be done with the website of UN-Oceans. Based on that information, UN-Oceans members would be asked to volunteer to establish a communications team to provide suggestions on how to make the website more visually appealing. Immediate updates to the website in terms of content included the corrections/updates provided by DOALOS/OLA and agreed to by the members of UN-Oceans and the inclusion of a section on SDG 14. Future updates, including a message from the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean and some others, could be submitted to DOALOS/OLA which would then send them to FAO.

Action point: FAO to follow up as to the improvements that might feasibly be made to the website, and report back to UN-Oceans members.

#### **Item 11. UN-Oceans Work Programme for 2018**

93. Upon the invitation of the Chair, DOALOS/OLA introduced the UN-Oceans draft work programme for 2018 which had also been circulated to all members for comments. It noted that it was important for UN-Oceans to continue its practice of presenting to the next meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea a work programme for this year until the General Assembly has reviewed the TORs of UN-Oceans.
94. In introducing the draft work programme, DOALOS/OLA highlighted that the main sections A, B, C and D remained the same and stemmed from the UN-Oceans TORs (mostly paragraph 2 of resolution 68/70), but that updates had been included, as well as new elements, for example the importance of collaborating with IOC-UNESCO following the adoption by the General Assembly of a Decade of Ocean Science, as well as Ocean Conference related developments.
95. IAEA proposed adding to the work programme support to the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean in the discharge of his mandate.
96. UN-OHRLLS highlighted the Interregional meeting for all small island developing States, in order to undertake a review of progress in the implementation of the

Samoa Pathway, coordinated by DESA and UN-OHRLS, for inclusion under section A.2.

97. The Chair requested DOALOS/OLA to amend the draft work programme for 2018 to reflect the proposals that had been made. The revised version is contained in annex III to this report.

#### **Item 12. Exchange of information**

98. The Chair invited DOALOS/OLA to introduce this agenda item. DOALOS/OLA provided information on the meetings of the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference; the Regular Process; the informal consultations of States Parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the meeting of the UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. It also informed UN-Oceans that in 2019, DOALOS/OLA and UNDP would be co-hosting the 50th anniversary meeting of GESAMP in New York.
99. UNESCO (Culture Sector) informed UN-Oceans that Italy had notified UNESCO of the discovery of several highly threatened underwater cultural heritage sites on the Skerki Banks, located in the areas beyond national jurisdiction between Sicily and Sardinia (Italy) and the coast of Tunisia. Italy declared its interest in being consulted regarding the discovery. States Parties to the 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage have been invited by UNESCO to declare their own interest in being consulted in how to ensure the effective protection of the sites. All States that have expressed such interest will be requested to work together on the best way to protect these archaeological sites.
100. UNEP indicated that Kenya had requested its assistance with the preparations for its Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy in November 2018 and proposed to work through UN-Oceans in that regard. It also proposed to solicit the views of UN-Oceans members in the preparation of the UNEP marine and coastal strategy.
101. IOC-UNESCO informed UN-Oceans members that it was organizing a side event together with Belgium and Nauru on “The Potential Interlinkages between the Ocean Science Decade and the BBNJ Process” on 16 April during the organizational meeting of the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference.
102. UN-Oceans members agreed to hold the next face-to-face meeting during the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference in September 2018.
103. WMO offered to host the face-to-face meeting in 2019 at its headquarters in Geneva.

Action point: DOALOS will advise UN-Oceans members on what date the next face-to-face meeting will be held during the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference.

**Item 13. Wrap up and closure of the meeting**

104. The Chair inquired if a member of UN-Oceans wished to bring to the attention of the meeting any other matter. That not being the case, the Chair expressed his gratitude to DOALOS/OLA for the preparation and support to the meeting, as well as UN-Oceans members for their participation.
105. DOALOS/OLA indicated that a report would be prepared and sent to UN-Oceans members for their quick review and approval once it had been cleared by the Chair.
106. UN-Oceans members thanked Mr. Vladimir Ryabinin for chairing the meeting and the warm and generous hospitality offered by him and the IOC-UNESCO.
107. The Chair thanked the participants and declared closed the seventeenth meeting of UN-Oceans.

