

UNITED NATIONS



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**Opening Remarks  
High-Level Political Forum  
SDG 14 and interlinkages with other SDGs – Life below water**

**Thursday, 7 July 2022, 3:00 -6:00 PM, CR 4 UNHQ**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Colleagues,**

**It is an honour to have this opportunity to brief you on the outcomes of the 2022 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 on the overarching theme “Scaling up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions.” The Conference was co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal in Lisbon from 27 June through 1 July.**

**More than 6,000 participants, including 24 Heads of State and Government from more than 150 countries, and over 2,000 representatives of civil society joined the Conference in Lisbon and galvanized momentum to save the ocean.**

**Allow me to share some key aspects of the political declaration arising from the Conference titled, “Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility”:**

**The declaration recognizes the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ocean-based economy and ocean health, including increased plastic waste. With that in mind, the declaration welcomes the outcome of the recent United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) to develop an internationally legally binding agreement on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.**

**The declaration connects ocean health and human health, which is critical in the context of a lingering pandemic. It also recognizes the importance of indigenous and traditional and local knowledge, and the need for further support to developing countries, especially for capacity-building, financing, and technology transfer.**

**The declaration commits to taking science-based and innovative actions, calling for full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls.**

**The declaration recognizes the adverse effects of climate change and its related impacts on island and coastal communities and emphasizes the importance of implementing the Paris Agreement and its 2°C and 1.5 °C goals as well as the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.**

**In doing so, it affirms the importance of implementing the Glasgow Climate Pact and commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from international maritime transportation.**

**The declaration recognizes the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus and calls for an ambitious, balanced, and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the second part of COP 15 of CBD.**

**The declaration also deeply regrets our collective failure to achieve targets 14.2, 14.4, 14.5 and 14.6 that matured in 2020, and renews our commitment to taking urgent action and to cooperating at all levels to achieve all targets without undue delay.**

**It is therefore noteworthy that the World Trade Organization has, less than two weeks ago, secured a deal to curb harmful fisheries subsidies. This deal has been more than 20 years in negotiation, and marks a win for addressing overfishing, and also for reaching SDG target 14.6.**

**The Conference was enriched by wide-ranging discussions – within official meetings, special events and some 300 side events – all related to SDG 14 and its linkages across the SDGs.**

**In addition to the official programme, four special events drove meaningful outcomes.**

**The Local and Regional Governments Forum addressed the impact of climate change on coastal cities.**

**The Youth and Innovation Forum provided a welcome opportunity to hear and consider youth perspectives.**

**The High-Level Water Symposium brought together the salt-water and fresh-water communities to highlight the interlinkages between SDG 6 and SDG 14.**

**At the Sustainable Blue Economy and Investment Forum a group of philanthropic organizations committed USD 1 billion for ocean conservation by 2030.**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**A key point noted by all participants is that SDG 14 is one of the least funded SDGs.**

**I am therefore happy to inform that Member States and other relevant stakeholders have carried forward the legacy of voluntary commitments established at the 2017 United Nations Ocean Conference and pledged billions of dollars for the ocean.**

**Close to 700 commitments have been registered on the online platform managed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and I encourage all of you who have not yet done so to register yours.**

**We have to ensure that ocean action is taken at all levels.**

**Financial pledges alone are not enough. Implementation is key.**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**During this session of HLPF, Goal 14 will be reviewed for the second time. It was first reviewed five years ago, in 2017, when the first UN Ocean Conference was held at UN Headquarters in New York.**

**As highlighted by the focus areas of the declaration, despite some progress made, the health of our ocean is still deteriorating fast and urgent action is needed if we are to change course.**

**Building on the outcome of the Ocean Conference in Lisbon and the momentum generated, I hope that we can set the foundation that will strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean action and drive well-financed partnerships and innovation.**

**DESA remains committed to supporting the acceleration of global efforts toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the remaining years.**

**I thank you.**

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