

## **Contribution of ODA to the SG's 2014 Report (Part I) On Oceans and Law of the Sea**

In addressing “the role of seafood in global food security”, the Informal Consultative Process may also wish to consider the implications for marine ecosystems of certain activities relating to the use, transport, or elimination of weapons of mass destruction. While disarmament and environmental challenges have often been addressed as separate issues, the environmental implications of these particular activities are starting to receive the recognition they deserve.

First, recent scientific studies have found that a nuclear war, even if limited to the use of 100 weapons in a specific region, could have catastrophic global effects over agricultural production as well as to marine ecosystems. This phenomenon is the “nuclear famine” that is anticipated to result from the harmful effects of smoke from firestorms, which when it reaches upper atmospheric can lead to ozone depletion. The effects extend to the world’s oceans, jeopardizing phytoplankton with significant implications for fisheries and aquaculture.

Second, recent chemical weapon disarmament activities in Syria have drawn new international attention to the safety and security of oceanic transport of chemical munitions and lethal chemical agents. Similar concerns have long been raised by coastal States concerned about oceanic shipments of plutonium and other radioactive substances.

Third, there have been numerous reports of significant ocean dumping over a period of many years of chemical munitions and lethal chemical agents, as well as various radioactive wastes connected with nuclear weapons programmes, including retired submarine reactors. There are great uncertainties about the amounts, location, and content of these dumped materials.

The First Committee of the General Assembly has adopted resolutions touching on many of these issues, including those devoted to the prohibition of dumping of radioactive wastes, the observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control, preventing the acquisition of nuclear materials by terrorists, increasing security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, among others.

The actual or potential risks from nuclear war, the transport of dangerous weapons materials, and the oceanic dumping of lethal weapon materials together underscore the importance of urgent progress in fulfilling multilateral nuclear disarmament commitments, in maintaining and strengthening national and multilateral controls of the safety and security of such materials in maritime transport, and in encouraging new scientific studies and international cooperation in characterizing risks to marine ecosystems from these specific activities.