

**Input of DESA/DSD to the report of the Secretary-General
on oceans and the law of the sea, Part I “The effects of climate change on oceans”**

The interactions between oceans and climate change have been widely recognized by Member States and stakeholders.

In the Rio+20 outcome document, “*The Future We Want*”, Member States reaffirmed that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and expressed profound alarm that emissions of greenhouse gases continue to rise globally. They expressed their deep concern that all countries, particularly developing countries, are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and are already experiencing increased impacts, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, further threatening food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. In this regard, they emphasized that adaptation to climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority. [Paragraph 190]

Member States recognized that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth’s ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it. They stressed the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, including through their contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security and creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change. Member States therefore committed to protect, and restore, the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, to maintain their biodiversity, enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations, and to effectively apply an ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach in the management, in accordance with international law, of activities having an impact on the marine environment, to deliver on all three dimensions of sustainable development. [Paragraph 158]

Member States noted that sea-level rise and coastal erosion are serious threats for many coastal regions and islands, particularly in developing countries, and in this regard they called upon the international community to enhance its efforts to address these challenges. [Paragraph 165]

Member States called for support to initiatives that address ocean acidification and the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems and resources. In this regard, they reiterated the need to work collectively to prevent further ocean acidification, as well as to enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and of the communities whose livelihoods depend on them, and to support marine scientific research, monitoring and observation of ocean acidification and particularly vulnerable ecosystems, including through enhanced international cooperation in this regard. [Paragraph 166]

Member States recognized the significant economic, social and environmental contributions of coral reefs, in particular to islands and other coastal States, as well as the significant vulnerability of coral reefs and mangroves to impacts, including from climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, destructive fishing practices and pollution, and supported international cooperation with a view to conserving coral reef and mangrove ecosystems and

realizing their social, economic and environmental benefits, as well as facilitating technical collaboration and voluntary information-sharing. [*Paragraph 176*]

Member States noted that sea-level rise and other adverse impacts of climate change continue to pose a significant risk to small island developing States and their efforts to achieve sustainable development and, for many, represent the gravest of threats to their survival and viability, including for some through the loss of territory. [*Paragraph 178*]

In “*The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” which was adopted in September 2015, Member States recognized that social and economic development depends on the sustainable management of our planet’s natural resources. They expressed determination to address decisively the threat posed by climate change and environmental degradation, and committed to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, as well as to conserve and sustainably use the oceans and seas and marine resources for sustainable. These commitments are reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 13 and 14 and their associated targets, including target 13.1 “Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries”, and target 14.3 “Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels”.

The Paris Agreement has articulated the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans and the protection of biodiversity.

To support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 70/226 and 70/303, in which Member States decided to convene 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 at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017, coinciding with World Oceans Day. The Governments of Fiji and Sweden will co-host the Conference. The overarching theme of the Conference will be “Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14”.

The Conference will be a great opportunity for Member States and all relevant stakeholders to identify ways and means to support the implementation of SDG 14, build on existing successful partnerships and stimulate innovative and concrete new partnerships to advance the implementation of Goal 14, including those relating to address the challenges and effects of climate change on the oceans, and foster climate resilient sustainable development of oceans and seas.
