

OHRLLS contributions to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, as mandated by United Nations General Assembly resolution 75/239 titled Oceans and the Law of the Sea

Introduction

The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the modalities set forth strengthened action on a range of small island developing States (SIDS) challenges and priorities, including challenges related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, and the preservation of the marine environment. Furthermore the high-level midterm review of the Samoa Pathway in September 2019 and the adoption of its political declaration, notes the importance of oceans, seas and marine resources to small island developing States and acknowledges their efforts to develop and implement strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources, and reaffirms its commitment to work with small island developing States towards the full implementation of the Samoa Pathway to ensure its success.

The Roadmap of key actions and activities to mobilize accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs¹, was endorsed in September 2020. The Roadmap provides a comprehensive map of activities and responsibilities of the wider UN family and other international and regional organizations and the activities include: (i) support towards accession, ratification and implementation of legal instruments related to transit transport and trade facilitation, including those related to oceans; (ii) Enhanced the role and participation of women scientists from LLDCs in deep-sea research; and (iii) assistance and support to increase awareness of potential benefits for LLDCs to ratify and implement the United National Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and participate in activities in the international seabed area (deep sea exploration, exploitation, marine scientific research).

Section II Capacity-building

Capacity-building is essential to ensure that States, in particular the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), are able to fully implement the UNCLOS, benefit from the sustainable development of the oceans and seas and participate fully in global and regional forums on ocean affairs and the law of the sea.

Furthermore, SDG target 14.A calls to increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution

¹ Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs in the Remaining Five Years

https://www.un.org/ohrls/sites/www.un.org.ohrls/files/roadmap_for_accelerated_implementation_of_vpoa_19_august2020.pdf

of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular the SIDS and the LDCs.

Ocean partnership is a crucial component of capacity building for the sustainable development path of SIDS as stipulated in the SAMOA Pathway. Recognizing that SIDS have been particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID, with key ocean sectors such as coastal tourism and fisheries severely hit, OHRLLS has increased its efforts to strengthen partnerships and capacity building to promote sustainable blue economy transition pathways in the recovery from pandemic.

During the reporting period, through the work of the SIDS Partnership Framework and the SIDS-Global Business Network, UN-OHRLLS promoted opportunities for partnerships and collaboration between SIDS, including with the private sector for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, a series of webinars have been organized on partnership opportunities for sustainable blue economy transition and pandemic recovery.

The first was a forum on ocean industries in cooperation with the World Ocean Council in December 2020, the second on renewable ocean energy in cooperation with IRENA in March 2020, and in June 2021, the GBN is hosting two events on resilience and recovery of key industries in SIDS, in particular tourism in Caribbean and AIS SIDS and fisheries in Pacific SIDS.

OHRLLS is currently drafting an assessment report on partnerships to achieve SDG 14 on healthy oceans and to increase the benefits for SIDS in ocean industries. This report which is to be finalised in the second half of 2021, assesses public-private partnerships in, between, and beyond SIDS and will present recommendations for how the GBN can be more impactful in developing capacity and strengthening blue economies for SIDS.

Section XI Marine science

Underscoring the critical role of marine scientific research plays a critical role for the responsible management of the marine environment and ocean resources. UN-OHRLLS engaged in efforts to enhance the participation of qualified scientists and technical personnel from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, in particular women scientists in deep-sea research (DSR).

UN-OHRLLS engaged with International Seabed Authority (ISA) to launch the Women in Deep Sea Research (WIDSR) project to promote the empowerment and leadership of women in marine science through enhancement of their role and participation in deep-sea research (DSR).

This project was officially launched at a high-level webinar titled ““Enhancing the role and participation of women in deep-sea scientific research to support the implementation of UNCLOS and advance the 2030 Agenda” was jointly organized by ISA and UN-OHRLLS on the occasion of International Women’s Day on 8 March 2021.

A work plan with a defined plan of activities has been developed in consultation with the participating partners and finalized in May 2021.

In June 2020, UN-OHRLLS and ISA co-organized an Ambassadorial Briefing on “Equitable sharing of benefits from sustainable development of deep seabed resources – Enhancing opportunities for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS”. The Briefing contributed to raising general awareness on the critical issues currently under discussion within ISA particularly those that are of specific relevance for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. As such, emphasis was placed on the regulatory framework under development (Mining Code & development of a mechanism for the equitable sharing of benefits derived from deep seabed mining), the different environmental management initiatives currently in development and the role of ISA in ensuring the dissemination of research results for all humankind.

UN-OHRLLS collaborated with Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Natural Sciences Sector of UNESCO, on the Ocean Decade Virtual series to co-host a session titled “Fostering innovative ocean science partnerships for SIDS in the Ocean Decade” held on 7 December 2020.

Advocacy Efforts on impacts of climate change on the oceans and the cryosphere, to which low-lying islands, in particular small island developing States

UN OHRLLS, within its mandate on advocacy for SIDS, has organized and contributed to a range of meetings and events to raise the profile of the challenges faced by SIDS from climate change, many of which in cooperation with Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). This includes an event series on climate change and security for SIDS and LDCs, organized in cooperation with UN Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs on 8 April 2021. provides a platform to (i) highlight recent analysis of the nexus of climate-related security risks, including from rising sea-level and human rights in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including opportunities to engage with international human rights mechanisms, and (ii) share work underway by national governments and the United Nations to promote successful, human-rights based, climate-security related policies, and exchange good practices.