
ADVANCE UNEDITED REPORTING MATERIAL

Eightieth session

Item 76 of the provisional agenda*

Oceans and the law of the sea

Oceans and the law of the sea

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which covers the period from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, is submitted pursuant to paragraph 377 of General Assembly resolution [79/144](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including the implementation of the resolution, for consideration at its eightieth session. The report, which is also submitted to States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, pursuant to article 319 of the Convention, highlights developments reported by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as by the bodies established under the Convention.

* [A/80/150](#).

I. Introduction

1. The present report highlights key developments relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including activities undertaken by the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations. It should be read together with other reports relevant to oceans and the law of the sea issued by the United Nations during the period under review,¹ as well as the detailed contributions provided by the United Nations specialized agencies, funds, programmes and bodies, and other intergovernmental organizations.²

II. Legal and policy framework

¹ These include: (a) report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/80/70), which addressed the topic of focus of the twenty-fifth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea; (b) report of the eighteenth round of informal consultations of States Parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (ICSP18/UNFSA/INF.3); (c) report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its twenty-fifth meeting (A/80/159); (d) report of the thirty-fifth meeting of the Meetings of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (SPLOS/35/11); (e) report on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects at its twenty-first meeting (A/79/238); (f) statement by the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Commission of the Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement 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 and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Agreement at the closing of the first session (A/AC.296/2025/9) and the second session (A/AC.296/2025/19); and (g) other relevant documents, such as the statements by the Chairperson of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission (CLCS/62/1, CLCS/63/2 and CLCS/64/2).

² Inputs have been received from the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Seabed Authority (ISA), International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Whaling Commission (IWC), North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), OSPAR Commission, Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO), South Pacific regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Trade Organization (WTO). All contributions are available at: un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/contributions80.htm.

2. At ocean-related meetings during the reporting period, States reaffirmed that the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)³ sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and recalled its strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector.⁴ The number of parties to UNCLOS and to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982⁵ stands at 170 and 153, respectively.

3. Following the accession of Comoros on 5 March 2025 to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement), the number of parties to that Agreement increased to 94.⁶

4. As at 31 August 2025, 141 States or regional economic integration organizations had signed the Agreement 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 (Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction)⁷ and 55 had ratified, approved or accepted it.⁸ A Preparatory Commission for the Entry into Force of the Agreement and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement held its first and second sessions in New York from 14 to 25 April 2025 and from 18 to 29 August 2025, respectively,⁹ addressing a number of issues under the three clusters of issues as decided at its organizational meeting in June 2024,¹⁰ including matters to be addressed by the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement at its first meeting and additional matters, as identified by the Commission.¹¹ A third meeting of the Preparatory Commission is expected to take place in New York from 23 March to 2 April 2026.

5. In relation to the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (Area), the Council of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) continued its work to develop draft regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area. In November 2024, the President of the Council issued a revised consolidated text¹² and the Council subsequently concluded the second reading of the

³ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1833, p. 3.

⁴ Report of the thirty-fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, SPLOS/35/11, para. 58; Report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its twenty-fifth meeting, A/80/159, para. 10; General Assembly resolution 79/144, preamble. See also General Assembly resolution 79/314, annex, para. 4.

⁵ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1836, p. 3.

⁶ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2167, p. 3 and C.N.217.2025.TREATIES-XXI.7 (Depositary Notification).

⁷ C.N.203.2023.TREATIES-XXI.10 (Depositary Notification). The BBNJ Agreement opened for signature on 20 September 2023:

⁸ See *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General*, chap. XXI.10. Available at <https://treaties.un.org>. The BBNJ Agreement will enter into force 120 days after the date of deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession, pursuant to article 68.

⁹ See General Assembly resolution 78/272, para. 3 and 11, and General Assembly Decision 78/560.

¹⁰ See Statement by the Co-Chair of the Preparatory Commission at the closing of the organizational meeting, [A/AC.296/2024/4](#).

¹¹ See Statement by the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Commission at the closing of the first session, [A/AC.296/2025/9](#), and Statement by the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Commission at the closing of the second session, [A/AC.296/2025/19](#).

¹² [ISBA/30/C/CRP.1](#).

text.¹³ The Assembly of the ISA exchanged views on a second periodic review of the international regime of the Area pursuant to article 154 of UNCLOS.

6. In relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, the 2025 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 (2025 United Nations Ocean Conference), held in June 2025 in Nice, France, resulted in the adoption, by consensus, of a declaration entitled “Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action”, which was endorsed by the General Assembly.¹⁴ Furthermore, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held from 14 to 23 July 2025, conducted an in-depth review of Goal 14.¹⁵

III. Maritime spaces and law of the sea proceedings

7. The Secretary-General received six deposits of charts and/or lists of geographical coordinates of points under UNCLOS. The Secretariat continued to draw the attention of States to the importance of technical standards for the collection, storage and dissemination of ocean-related geospatial information, including in the context of future implementation of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.¹⁶

8. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf approved four sets of recommendations.¹⁷ To improve efficiency, the Commission adopted revised rules of procedure¹⁸ and commenced a new pattern of meetings, consisting of three sessions of five weeks each at United Nations Headquarters, complemented by increased intersessional work.¹⁹

9. The ISA reported that 30 contracts for exploration were in force²⁰ and one additional contract was being finalized.²¹

10. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) delivered orders including on the prescription of provisional measures in *The “Zheng He” Case (Luxembourg v. Mexico)* (Case No. 33).²² The special chamber of the Tribunal hearing

¹³ ISA contribution.

¹⁴ General Assembly resolution 79/314, annex.

¹⁵ <https://hlpf.un.org/2025>. See Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2025 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Council on the theme “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind, E/HLPF/2025/1.

¹⁶ See General Assembly resolution 79/144, para 6; and <https://iho.int/en/standards-and-specifications>.

¹⁷ The Commission also established three subcommissions and commenced the examination of two revised submissions by way of the subcommissions that had been established for the consideration of those submissions. See Statements by the Chair on the progress of work in the Commission at its sixty-second, sixty-third and sixty-fourth sessions, respectively: CLCS/62/1, CLCS/63/2 and CLCS/64/2 (to be issued); Letter dated 11 April 2025 from the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf addressed to the President of the thirty-fifth Meeting of States Parties, SPLOS/35/6, paras. 7 and 10.

¹⁸ CLCS/40/Rev.2.

¹⁹ See SPLOS/34/12, paras. 56 and 69. See generally SPLOS/35/6, paras. 14-20.

²⁰ ISA contribution; ISBA/29/A/2, para. 51 and ISBA/30/C/2, para 2.

²¹ ISA contribution; ISBA/30/C/2, para. 3. For updates on the thirtieth session of the Authority, see www.isa.org.jm/news/the-council-of-the-international-seabed-authority-concludes-part-i-of-its-thirtieth-session.

²² ITLOS contribution. See www.itlos.org/en/main/cases/list-of-cases/the-zheng-he-case-

The M/T “Heroic Idun” (No. 2) Case (Marshall Islands/Equatorial Guinea) (Case No. 32) adopted procedural orders.²³

11. On 19 May 2025, the International Court of Justice rendered its judgment on the merits in the *Land and Maritime Delimitation and Sovereignty over Islands (Gabon/Equatorial Guinea)* case.²⁴ On 23 July 2025, the Court rendered its advisory opinion on the *Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change*, following an unprecedented level of engagement in the proceedings, including the filing of 91 written statements and oral statements delivered by 96 States and 11 international organizations.²⁵

12. The Permanent Court of Arbitration continued to be seized of two arbitrations brought under UNCLOS between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on *Coastal State Rights in the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, and Kerch Strait* and the *Detention of Ukrainian Naval Vessels and Servicemen*.²⁶

IV. Importance of the human dimension

13. The global emergency facing the ocean, including interrelated threats of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, is threatening communities worldwide.²⁷ Poverty, conflict, and environmental challenges continued to drive dangerous journeys by sea.²⁸ Work in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors remained difficult, with many people working in hazardous conditions and human and labour rights abuses observed throughout the value chains of these sectors.²⁹ Ongoing attacks on international shipping (see sect. V) have endangered the lives of seafarers, and cases of seafarer abandonment continued to be reported.³⁰ In this context, the human rights dimensions of these challenges have received renewed attention.³¹ United Nations entities have been working to address these challenges, as well as to promote gender equality in ocean-related sectors.

A. Labour at sea

14. Seafarers and fishers continued to face challenges due to violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault, as well as detention and abandonment at sea. The database of the International Labour

[luxembourg-v-mexico/the-zheng-he-case-luxembourg-v-mexico-provisional-measures/](#) and [www.itlos.org/en/main/cases/list-of-cases/the-zheng-he-case-luxembourg-v-mexico/](#).

²³ ITLOS contribution. See [www.itlos.org/en/main/cases/list-of-cases/the-m/t-heroic-idun-no-2-case-marshall-islands/equatorial-guinea/](#).

²⁴ ICJ contribution. See [www.icj-cij.org/case/179](#).

²⁵ ICJ contribution. See [https://www.icj-cij.org/case/187](#). Written statements were filed by 79 States and 12 organizations. 63 written comments were filed by 55 States and eight organizations.

²⁶ PCA contribution. See [https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/149/](#) and [https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/229/](#).

²⁷ General Assembly resolution 79/314, Annex, para. 3; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment on the ocean and human rights, A/HRC/58/59, paras. 5, 6.

²⁸ IOM contribution.

²⁹ FAO, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (Rome 2024), p. 171. Available at [https://www.fao.org/publications/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-world-fisheries-and-aquaculture/en](#).

³⁰ ILO and IMO contribution.

³¹ Human Rights Council resolution 58/16. See also A/HRC/58/59; “Ocean issues are human rights issues, says UN expert”, 14 March 2025, at [https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/03/ocean-issues-are-human-rights-issues-says-un-expert](#).

Organization (ILO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) on abandonment of seafarers recorded 312 new cases in 2024 and 159 by mid-June of 2025.³² Considering these challenges, the ILO Special Tripartite Committee adopted new amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention addressing violence and harassment on board ships and strengthening social protection, which will enter into force in December 2027.³³ Following joint work between ILO and IMO, the IMO Legal Committee also adopted guidelines on the fair treatment of seafarers detained in connection with alleged crimes.³⁴

15. The IMO Facilitation Committee approved amendments to the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic concerning vaccination and medical care for seafarers during international public health emergencies.³⁵ IMO and ILO were engaged in coordination efforts to enhance training for seafarers and port State control officers.³⁶

16. In the fisheries sector, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) delivered capacity-building activities related to child labour, social protection and decent working conditions.³⁷ The ILO prepared online training courses on the detection of forced labour situations in industrial fishing activities and the training of inspectors.³⁸

17. FAO and ILO continued to engage with regional bodies to promote decent work and social protection in the sector.³⁹ Acting on recommendations from the Joint FAO-ILO-IMO Working Group on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing, FAO facilitated an interagency workshop to coordinate the implementation of relevant conventions.⁴⁰ A study is scheduled to be conducted by FAO to explore the potential use of fishing vessel tracking systems in addressing forced labour.⁴¹

B. Migration by sea

18. Thousands of men, women and children undertook perilous sea journeys across various maritime routes.⁴² Often relying on smugglers, refugees and migrants moving irregularly by sea were exposed to serious risks including trafficking in persons, kidnapping for ransom, inhumane treatment and death.⁴³ Limited State-led search and rescue (SAR) capacities, restrictions on non-governmental organization-led SAR operations, incidents of pushbacks at sea in violation of the principle of non-refoulement and prolonged detention of rescued people compounded these risks.⁴⁴ A

³² ILO contribution. See also ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers, available at <https://wwwex.ilo.org/dyn/r/abandonment/seafarers/home>.

³³ ILO contribution.

³⁴ IMO contribution; see also IMO resolution LEG.7(112).

³⁵ IMO contribution; see also IMO document FAL 49/22/Add.1, annex 2.

³⁶ ILO contribution.

³⁷ FAO contribution.

³⁸ ILO contribution.

³⁹ FAO and ILO contributions.

⁴⁰ FAO contribution.

⁴¹ ILO contribution.

⁴² IOM and UNCHR contributions; see also Report of the Secretary General on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, A/79/590, para. 66. According to IOM's Missing Migrants Project, between September 2024 to May 2025 at least 3,650 people lost their lives during maritime migration journeys worldwide; see <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>.

⁴³ IOM and UNHCR contributions. See also Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants: Phenomenon of migrants going missing or subjected to enforced disappearance – human rights analysis, A/HRC/59/49, paras. 66-67.

⁴⁴ IOM and UNHCR contributions.

report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration⁴⁵ noted the need to enhance safe and regular migration pathways and recommended, inter alia, a humanitarian and precautionary approach to identifying and responding to possible distress situations and the strengthening of search and rescue capacity in line with international law and the principle of humanity.⁴⁶

19. Addressing these challenges, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued working with States and partners, including through regional forums, to promote cooperative and protection-sensitive approaches to SAR and disembarkation to a place of safety.⁴⁷ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) strengthened its work on missing migrants, including through joint efforts with UNHCR and other stakeholders.⁴⁸ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held expert consultations to inform its forthcoming updates of the Model Law against the Smuggling of Migrants and the Legislative Guide for the Implementation of the Protocol on the Smuggling of Migrants.⁴⁹ In addition, UNODC continued monitoring and analyzing the smuggling of migrants by sea and published a study on this issue in the context of the Ukraine conflict.⁵⁰

20. Among the actions taken to build capacity for the protection of life at sea, IOM and UNHCR held trainings and workshops with coastal States on the legal frameworks applicable to migration by sea.⁵¹ IOM also provided legal, policy and operational support to States with a view to promoting a rights-based approach to migration governance.⁵² UNODC conducted capacity-building activities, including regional exercises and joint projects, to improve coordination, transparency and human rights compliance in maritime law enforcement and rescue operations, and combat trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.⁵³

21. The inter-agency group on the protection of refugees and migrants moving by sea continued sharing information regarding SAR practices, as well as challenges and opportunities to advance the protection of life at sea consistent with international

⁴⁵ General Assembly resolution 73/195, annex.

⁴⁶ A/79/590, paras. 10 and 56 and, annex, recommendations 1(c), (e), (f) and (g). See also IOM and UNHCR contributions; and Summary of the Informal plenary meeting of the General Assembly in order to consider the biennial report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration, available at https://migrationnetwork.un.org/system/files/docs/Draft%20Summary_%20GA%20meeting%20on%20SGR.pdf.

⁴⁷ UNHCR contribution. See International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979, annex para 3.1.9; International Convention on Safety of Lives at Sea, 1974, annex ch. V reg 33(1-1) and IMO Guidelines on the Treatment of Persons Rescued at Sea, IMO Doc MSC 78/26/Add.2 annex 34.

⁴⁸ IOM contribution. Relevant stakeholders included the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. See also A/79/590, annex, and <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sg-recommendations/recommendations-strengthening-cooperation-missing-migrants-and-providing>.

⁴⁹ UNODC contribution; see also https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Model_Law_Smuggling_of_Migrants_10-52715_Ebook.pdf and www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/legislative-guide.html.

⁵⁰ UNODC contribution; see also UNODC, Study on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in the Context of the Displacement Caused by the War Against Ukraine (United Nations publication, 2025).

⁵¹ IOM and UNHCR contributions. See also IOM and UNHCR's online course on the Protection of Migrants and Refugees Moving by Sea, available at <https://onlinecourses.iihl.org/>.

⁵² IOM contribution.

⁵³ UNODC contribution.

law.⁵⁴ UNHCR, IOM, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other stakeholders issued a joint statement calling for a humanitarian and precautionary approach in identifying and responding to situations of distress at sea.⁵⁵

C. Gender-related aspects

22. Women continue to be significantly underrepresented in most ocean-related sectors. In fisheries, only 24 per cent of fishers and fish farmers were women, whereas in the post-harvest sector, women constituted 62 per cent of the workforce.⁵⁶ In the maritime sector, women represented about 19 per cent of the workforce but only one per cent of active seafarers.⁵⁷ Gender inequalities in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors included differences in wages, insufficient recognition of women's contributions to the sector, and gender-based violence.⁵⁸ In the maritime industry, gender-related barriers included recruitment biases, lack of opportunities for promotion, and insufficient support for work-life balance.⁵⁹

23. Among its efforts to empower women in the maritime community, the IMO developed gender equality markers which were being integrated into its programmatic work, and its Women in Maritime programme supported two major regional conferences to promote gender equity in the maritime sector.⁶⁰ FAO worked with partners to strengthen women's participation and representation in small-scale fisheries organizations, including in decision-making processes.⁶¹ ISA advanced various initiatives to encourage participation of women in deep sea research, including trainings and a mentoring programme.⁶² The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) continued its initiative to empower women in hydrography.⁶³ The United Nations Transitional Mission in Somalia and UNODC organized a workshop to empower women's participation in maritime security and the blue economy, with female participants from Somalia and Kenya.⁶⁴

V. Maritime safety and security

24. Within IMO, progress was made towards the development of a non-mandatory maritime autonomous shipping code, which was expected to form the basis of a future

⁵⁴ IOM and UNHCR contributions.

⁵⁵ UNHCR contribution. See Joint statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially Women and Children, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and the Centre for Humanitarian Action at Sea, *Distress at sea: a call for a humanitarian and precautionary approach*, 18 December 2024, available at: www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/joint-statement-on-distress-at-sea.pdf.

⁵⁶ ILO contribution. See also FAO, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (Rome, 2024), p. xviii.

⁵⁷ IMO/WISTA, *Women in Maritime Survey 2024*, pp. 10-13 and 112, available at <https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/technicalcooperation/pages/imo-wista-women-in-maritime-survey-2024.aspx>.

⁵⁸ ILO contribution. See also FAO, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* (2024), p. 64.

⁵⁹ IMO contribution.

⁶⁰ IMO contribution.

⁶¹ FAO contribution.

⁶² ISA contribution.

⁶³ IHO contribution.

⁶⁴ DPPA contribution.

mandatory code.⁶⁵ IMO also agreed to carry out a comprehensive revision of the IMO guidelines on implementing the International Safety Management Code and to strengthen the consistent enforcement of the Code.⁶⁶

25. In preparation for the prospective entry into force of the Cape Town Agreement dealing with reinforcement of fishing vessel safety, IMO adopted interim guidance to assist in the implementation of that Agreement.⁶⁷

26. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) collaborated with IMO and the IHO in implementing the Worldwide Met-Ocean Information and Warning Service, which provides warnings and forecasts to meet the obligations for the meteorological maritime safety information as articulated in the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea.⁶⁸

27. With regard to maritime security, the high-level open debates of the Security Council on “Strengthening Maritime Security through International Cooperation for Global Stability”, held on 20 and 21 May 2025, and on “Maritime Security: Prevention, Innovation, and International Cooperation to Address Emerging Challenges”, held on 11 and 12 August 2025, addressed a broad range of traditional and emerging maritime security challenges.

28. During the reporting period, attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden continued. The Security Council adopted resolution 2768 (2025), condemning Houthi attacks on commercial shipping and demanding their cessation.

29. Piracy and armed robbery at sea saw a slight decrease in 2024, with 116 incidents reported compared with 120 reported in 2023.⁶⁹ Incidents in the Singapore Strait remained high, with 43 incidents reported in 2024. In the Gulf of Guinea, piracy and armed robbery at sea continued to decrease overall from 22 in 2023 to 18 recorded in 2024, but crew members continue to be at risk, with the region accounting for all 12 kidnapping of crew members recorded in 2024 and for 23 per cent of all crew members taken hostage in 2024. Regional cooperation to enhance maritime security, including legal reforms and cooperation in monitoring and enforcement, has contributed to the decline in incidents in the Gulf of Guinea in recent years.⁷⁰

30. During the reporting period, efforts were made to address a wide range of crimes at sea, including piracy and armed robbery against ships;⁷¹ illegal traffic in hazardous wastes and other wastes and illegal traffic in hazardous chemicals; human trafficking; drug and weapon smuggling; fisheries offences, including illegal fishing; and intentional damage to submarine cables.⁷²

31. UNODC provided capacity-building, training and technical assistance on addressing a range of threats to maritime security, including in collaboration with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (Division),⁷³ and aimed at

⁶⁵ IMO contribution; see also www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/meetingsummaries/pages/temporary-msc-110-summary.aspx.

⁶⁶ See www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/meetingsummaries/pages/temporary-msc-110-summary.aspx.

⁶⁷ IMO contribution; see also IMO resolution MSC.571(109).

⁶⁸ WMO contribution.

⁶⁹ International Maritime Bureau (IMB), *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Report for the Period 1 January–31 December 2024* (London, 2024). Available at <https://icc-ccs.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-Jan-Dec-IMB-Piracy-and-Armed-Robbery-Report-2.pdf>.

⁷⁰ IMO document MSC 110/9.

⁷¹ DPPA, IMO and UNODC contributions; see also IMO documents LEG 112/7, MSC 109/9 and MSC 109/22.

⁷² BRS, DPPA, FAO, ILO, IMO and UNODC contributions.

⁷³ UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme collaborated with the Division in the delivery of regional workshops in ocean affairs and the law of the sea for the Indian Ocean Region and the Latin America and Caribbean region, as well as for a customized national capacity-building

strengthening national capacity to investigate and disrupt maritime crime around the world.⁷⁴ Activities were also undertaken to prevent and punish illegal traffic in hazardous wastes and other wastes under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, including training and a revision of a law enforcement manual,⁷⁵ and to address wildlife crime related to marine species under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.⁷⁶ UNODC worked to advance regional cybersecurity by convening a forum in East Africa to develop and share best practices that strengthen the security and resilience of critical undersea cable networks.⁷⁷ The International Telecommunication Union, in partnership with the International Cable Protection Committee, launched the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience which aims to prevent natural and anthropogenic damage to cables, improve maintenance and strengthen cooperation between States and cable companies.⁷⁸

32. In addressing fraudulent registration and fraudulent registries of ships, IMO agreed on the development of guidelines or best practices on ship registration and adopted Performance standards for a universal shipborne automatic identification system.⁷⁹ IMO also approved revised Guidelines on maritime cyber risk management and continued to implement activities and expand the range of training available under its Enhancement of Global Maritime Security programme.⁸⁰

VI. Climate change and the ocean and sea level rise

33. The year 2024 was confirmed as the warmest on record, with 2015–2024 marking the ten hottest years observed.⁸¹ Ocean heat content reached a new record⁸² and global mean sea level was at a record high in 2024.⁸³ Widespread marine heatwaves and a strong El Niño event contributed to exceptional sea surface temperatures.⁸⁴ These global signals were mirrored regionally, reinforcing the urgency of ocean monitoring and early warning capabilities.⁸⁵

34. The minimum daily extent of Arctic sea-ice in 2024 was the seventh lowest in the observed record.⁸⁶ The annual minimum and maximum of Antarctic sea-ice extent were each the second lowest in the observed record.⁸⁷ Surface ocean pH

programme for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

⁷⁴ UNODC contribution. Activities covered such threats as crimes in the fisheries sector, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, law enforcement capacity building, intelligence sharing, drug trafficking, piracy and armed robbery against ships, illicit trade in goods and weapons and environmental crimes.

⁷⁵ BRS contribution.

⁷⁶ CITES contribution.

⁷⁷ UNODC contribution.

⁷⁸ ITU contribution.

⁷⁹ IMO contribution; see also IMO resolution MSC.570(109).

⁸⁰ IMO contribution; see also IMO circular MSC-FAL.1/Circ.3/Rev.3.

⁸¹ World Meteorological Organization, *State of the Global Climate 2024* (Geneva, 2025). Available at https://library.wmo.int/viewer/69455/download?file=WMO-1368-2024_en.pdf&type=pdf&navigator=1.

⁸² WMO contribution.

⁸³ WMO contribution.

⁸⁴ WMO contribution.

⁸⁵ WMO contribution.

⁸⁶ WMO contribution.

⁸⁷ WMO contribution.

continues to decline, confirming continued acidification across global ocean basins.⁸⁸

35. On 25 September 2024, the General Assembly held a high-level plenary meeting on addressing the threats posed by sea level rise,⁸⁹ which addressed four themes: Sea level rise and its legal dimensions; Adaptation, finance and resilience in relation to sea level rise; Livelihoods, socioeconomic challenges and culture and heritage in relation to sea level rise; and Knowledge, data and science to inform sea level rise risk assessments and decision-making. During the meeting, the need for legal certainty, solidarity with affected States, and the mobilization of climate finance and technology transfer was emphasized.⁹⁰ At its seventy-sixth session, the International Law Commission adopted a final report of the Study Group on Sea-level rise in relation to international law, which proposed possible ways forward to address relevant international legal issues.⁹¹

36. Recognition of the ocean's central role in climate action continued to expand, as did actions to leverage synergies between ocean and climate change processes, including through an Ocean Action Panel during the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference;⁹² the 2025 Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,⁹³ which included a discussion on the synergies with the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction; and the outcomes of the twenty-ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which reaffirmed the importance of ocean-based mitigation and adaptation.⁹⁴ Notably, of the 23 new Nationally Determined Contributions analysed between 1 October 2024 and 5 May 2025, 74 per cent included ocean-based mitigation and adaptation measures, targets, and policies.⁹⁵ The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted relevant decisions on the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus as well as targets under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on ocean conservation, sustainable use and restoration measure (see sect. VII).⁹⁶

37. The recognition of the need for integrated ocean-climate action grounded in science is also growing. The FAO reviewed regional fishery bodies' science-based responses to climate change.⁹⁷ The Joint WMO– Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC) Collaborative Board prioritised action areas which enhanced ocean-climate cooperation.⁹⁸ The Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change included a module on ocean science-

⁸⁸ WMO contribution; see also United Nations, *Surging seas in a warming world: the latest science on present-day impact and future projections of sea-level rise* (United Nations, 2024), available at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/slr_technical_brief_26_aug_2024.pdf.

⁸⁹ General Assembly decision 78/544 and General Assembly resolution 78/319.

⁹⁰ See Secretary-General's Summary of the High-level Meeting on Addressing the threats posed by sea level rise, available at <https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/SG%20Draft%20Summary%20Sea%20Level%20Rise%20%28approved%20FOSG%29.pdf>.

⁹¹ International Law Commission, *Report of the International Law Commission, Seventy-sixth Session (28 April–30 May 2025)*, UN Doc. A/79/10 (forthcoming), ch. IV, "Sea-level rise in relation to international law."; advanced copy: https://legal.un.org/ilc/reports/2025/english/a_80_10_advance.pdf.

⁹² UNFCCC contribution.

⁹³ UNFCCC contribution.

⁹⁴ UNFCCC contribution.

⁹⁵ UNFCCC contribution.

⁹⁶ SCBD contribution; see also CBD/COP/DEC/16/22.

⁹⁷ FAO contribution.

⁹⁸ WMO contribution.

based solutions in a new course to support international climate negotiations.⁹⁹ Ocean Day at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity featured sessions on ocean, climate, science and technology.¹⁰⁰

38. In its advisory opinion on the *Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change* issued on 23 July 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) unanimously affirmed that States have binding obligations under international law—including climate change treaties, customary international law, international human rights law and UNCLOS—to ensure the protection of the climate system from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁰¹ The Court also emphasized that the 1.5°C threshold constituted the primary temperature goal under the Paris Agreement. The Court held that breaching these obligations constitutes an internationally wrongful act, giving rise to State responsibility.¹⁰² In relation to UNCLOS, the Court reiterated the opinion of ITLOS (Climate Change, Advisory Opinion, ITLOS Reports 2024) that GHG emissions constitute marine pollution under UNCLOS, and found that States parties have obligations to protect and preserve the marine environment, including from GHG emissions and the adverse effects of climate change, and to co-operate in good faith.¹⁰³ In addition, the Court considered that UNCLOS does not require States, in the context of physical changes resulting from climate-change related sea level rise, to update their charts or lists of geographical co-ordinates that show the baselines and outer limit lines of their maritime zones once they have been duly established in conformity with UNCLOS.¹⁰⁴

39. In its Advisory Opinion on Climate emergency and human rights, dated 29 May 2025, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights affirmed that the American Convention on Human Rights imposed legal obligations on its States Parties to address the climate emergency, including due to the adverse impacts of climate change on the ocean and marine ecosystems.¹⁰⁵

40. The IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) approved a draft text for an IMO Net-Zero Framework, for adoption as a new chapter of Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.¹⁰⁶ The draft measures include a new fuel standard for ships and a global pricing mechanism for emissions from ships. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) published an updated and expanded edition of a regional report on the ocean, seas and marine resources in the context of climate change.¹⁰⁷

41. In terms of adaptation, work continued under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Global Goal on Adaptation, in particular the work programme on indicators, resulting in a consolidated list of indicator options and a progress report.¹⁰⁸ The FAO promoted climate solutions for aquatic food across

⁹⁹ UNFCCC contribution. See:

<https://unccelearn.org/course/view.php?id=206&page=overview&lang=en>.

¹⁰⁰ SCBD contribution.

¹⁰¹ *Obligation of States in Respect of Climate Change* (Request for Advisory Opinion), Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2025, p. [forthcoming], 23 July 2025.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, paras. 405 to 455.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, paras. 339 to 354.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, paras. 358 to 363.

¹⁰⁵ Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, Advisory Opinion AO-32/25, available at https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/opiniones/seriea_32_en.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ IMO contribution.

¹⁰⁷ ECLAC contribution.

¹⁰⁸ FCCC/SB/2025/3, available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/645725>; see also the reports of technical expert groups, available at <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/introduction-to-adaptation-and-resilience/loss-and-damage/reports-by-technical-experts-uae-belem-work-programme-may-2025>; and UNFCCC, Technical report on indicators for

several regions.¹⁰⁹ UN-Habitat implemented an Adaptation Fund project strengthening the resilience of coastal settlements.¹¹⁰ United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) continued its work on adaptation of seaports and other critical coastal transport infrastructure.¹¹¹ Regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements continued to address the impacts of climate change on stocks and ecosystems.¹¹²

VII. Ocean sustainability

42. The ocean continued to face mounting pressures from overfishing, pollution, biodiversity loss, climate change and acidification.¹¹³ Despite growing efforts, only 8.4 per cent of marine and coastal areas were within protected and conserved areas, falling significantly short of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework target to effectively conserve and manage 30 per cent of marine and coastal areas by 2030.¹¹⁴ The *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025* noted that achieving ocean sustainability would require integrated ocean stewardship that is grounded in science and supported by effective fisheries management, ecosystem-based approaches, ambitious and strategic marine conservation, and robust ocean finance.¹¹⁵ This, in turn, would demand the urgent scaling up of investment, enhanced international cooperation and innovative partnerships across all levels of society.¹¹⁶

43. The Summit of the Future, held in September 2024, adopted the Pact for the Future, which includes a commitment to take ambitious action to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems.¹¹⁷ The 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference further galvanized political will and global action for ocean sustainability,¹¹⁸ including through the registration of over 800 voluntary commitments.¹¹⁹ The 2025 United Nations Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake stressed the role of sustainable aquaculture in food security and ocean health, with global aquaculture production now surpassing capture fisheries.¹²⁰

44. The momentum was also reflected in the growing participation in, and strengthened implementation of, ocean-related instruments. In addition to the

measuring progress achieved towards the targets referred to in paragraphs 9–10 of Decision 2/CMA.5, available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/647061>.

¹⁰⁹ FAO contribution.

¹¹⁰ UN-Habitat contribution.

¹¹¹ UNCTAD contribution.

¹¹² NAFO and SPRFMO contributions.

¹¹³ A/80/81-E/2025/62, para 117. See also, the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, pp. 36–37: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2025.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, p. 36. See also, UNEP, “Protected Planet Report 2024”, Chapter 3: https://digitalreport.protectedplanet.net/?chapter=3#report_chapters-3.

¹¹⁵ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, p. 36

¹¹⁶ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, p. 36. See also, A/80/81-E/2025/62, para 117.

¹¹⁷ General Assembly resolution 79/1, para 29.

¹¹⁸ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, p. 36. See also A/80/81-E/2025/62, para 11, and ECLAC, FAO, IHO, ILO, NEAFC, OSPAR, SCBD, UNFCCC, UN-Habitat and UNOOSA contributions.

¹¹⁹ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, p. 36:

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2025.pdf>.

See also, A/80/81-E/2025/62, para 117.

¹²⁰ FAO, The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024 – Blue Transformation in action (Rome, 2024), p. xxi.

progress towards entry into force of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction noted above, the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies had been ratified by 108 members, only three short of the threshold for entry into force;¹²¹ and the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing had reached 84 Parties.¹²²

45. The ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus is receiving growing recognition, including in view of the critical role that ocean sustainability plays in addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested its Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Division, to explore opportunities for addressing the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus in an integrated manner in order to achieve the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.¹²³ Efforts towards ocean sustainability also continued under other biodiversity-related conventions, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora¹²⁴ and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

46. The development of sustainable ocean-based economies remained a focus, with continued efforts to develop and implement initiatives, policies, regulations and action plans,¹²⁵ promote sustainable trade in ocean-related goods and services,¹²⁶ and provide capacity-building and technical assistance,¹²⁷ including through the Division's capacity-building programmes.¹²⁸ Particular attention was given to advancing integrated approaches and tools, such as marine spatial planning,¹²⁹ integrated coastal zone management¹³⁰ and integrated land-sea planning,¹³¹ promoting area-based management tools,¹³² and supporting the development of circular economies.¹³³ Efforts also focused on strengthening resilience through timely and reliable marine forecasts and early warning systems,¹³⁴ and on promoting the participation of women, youth and other groups.¹³⁵

47. Global and regional dialogues continued to play a vital role in facilitating policy discussions and fostering international cooperation to advance sustainable ocean-based economies, including in the context of the Fifth United Nations Ocean Forum on trade-related aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 14, held in March 2025 in

¹²¹ WTO contribution. See also, the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, p. 37; and the current status: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_acceptances_e.htm.

¹²² FAO contribution. See also, the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, p. 37: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2025.pdf>; and the current status: <https://www.fao.org/port-state-measures/background/parties-psma/en/>.

¹²³ SCBD contribution. See also CBD/COP/DEC/16/22, para. 16.

¹²⁴ CITES contribution.

¹²⁵ BRS, DPPA, ECLAC, FAO, ILO, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNIDO and UNODC contributions.

¹²⁶ ECLAC and UNCTAD contributions.

¹²⁷ BRS, DPPA, ECLAC, FAO, ILO, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UNODC and WTO contributions.

¹²⁸ See un.org/oceancapacity for capacity-building and technical assistance opportunities and sustainable ocean-based economy resources.

¹²⁹ ASCOBANS, FAO, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, OSPAR, UNEP, UNFCCC, UN-Habitat and UNIDO contributions.

¹³⁰ IOC-UNESCO, UNEP and UNFCCC contributions.

¹³¹ UNEP and UN-Habitat contributions.

¹³² CCAMLR, FAO, ISA, IWC, NEAFC, OSPAR, SCBD, SPRFMO and UNEP contributions.

¹³³ FAO, ITU, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD, UNIDO and UNEP contributions.

¹³⁴ FAO, IOC-UNESCO, UNEP, UN-Habitat and WMO contributions.

¹³⁵ DPPA, FAO, ECLAC, ILO and UNEP contributions.

Geneva;¹³⁶ the Blue Economy and Finance Forum, held in June 2025 in Monaco;¹³⁷ and the International Conference on the Blue Economy in the Gulf of Guinea, held in July 2025 in Yaoundé.¹³⁸

48. Efforts to address persistent gaps in ocean finance also continued, including through leveraging climate finance.¹³⁹ The outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the *Sevilla Commitment*, recognized that accelerating ocean action globally requires significant and accessible finance, along with adequate and scaled-up means of implementation for developing countries, and called for greater mobilization of resources from all sources.¹⁴⁰ A coalition of certain United Nations agencies and other partners launched a co-design process for a “One Ocean Finance” facility, aimed at catalysing funding from ocean-dependent industries and sectors.¹⁴¹

A. Promoting marine science and technology

49. Reaching its mid-point this year, the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development had galvanized 20,000 individuals to implement 61 global programmes and over 500 regional or national projects.¹⁴² The Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ocean Decade identified a series of recommendations to increase its impact in the remaining five years.¹⁴³ Efforts to support the implementation of the Ocean Decade, and to advance marine science and technology in general, included advancing research on marine biodiversity and ecosystems,¹⁴⁴ including in the deep sea;¹⁴⁵ the ocean-climate nexus, including ocean-atmosphere interactions, ocean acidification, deoxygenation and blue carbon;¹⁴⁶ bathymetry;¹⁴⁷ and interdisciplinary research.¹⁴⁸ Such efforts also included improving the scientific understanding of the impacts of human activities,¹⁴⁹ supporting technological innovation and application,¹⁵⁰ empowering women¹⁵¹ and early-career ocean professionals,¹⁵² fostering partnerships,¹⁵³ and promoting investment in marine science.¹⁵⁴

50. The collection, sharing and management of ocean-related data remained a priority,¹⁵⁵ with the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) monitoring the ocean

¹³⁶ UNCTAD contribution. See also: <https://unctad.org/meeting/5th-united-nations-ocean-forum-trade-related-aspects-sustainable-development-goal-14>.

¹³⁷ UNCTAD contribution. See also: <https://beff2025monaco.org>.

¹³⁸ See <https://press.un.org/en/2025/dsgsm1987.doc.htm>.

¹³⁹ FAO, UNCTAD, UNEP and UNFCCC contributions.

¹⁴⁰ General Assembly resolution 79/323, annex, para. 41(e).

¹⁴¹ “Press Release: UN & Partners Join Forces to Advance a Transformative Financial Architecture for the Ocean Call for Engagement to Co-Design the One Ocean Finance Facility”, at: <https://www.uncdf.org/article/8915/un-global-partners-announce-call-for-engagement-to-co-design-global-one-ocean-finance-facility>.

¹⁴² IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁴³ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁴⁴ IOC-UNESCO, IWC, PICES, SCBD, SPRFMO and UNEP contributions.

¹⁴⁵ ISA and IWC contributions.

¹⁴⁶ IAEA, IOC-UNESCO, UNFCCC and WMO contributions.

¹⁴⁷ IHO contribution.

¹⁴⁸ FAO and WMO contributions.

¹⁴⁹ BRS, FAO, IAEA, ISA, ITU, IWC, NASCO, SEAFO, SPRFMO and UNEP contributions.

¹⁵⁰ FAO, IAEA, IMO, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, UNFCCC and UNOOSA contributions.

¹⁵¹ IHO and ISA contributions.

¹⁵² IOC-UNESCO, ISA and PICES contributions.

¹⁵³ IAEA, ISA, ITU, IWC and UNEP contributions.

¹⁵⁴ ECLAC and ISA contributions.

¹⁵⁵ FAO, IAEA, IHO, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, ITU, SPRFMO, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNOOSA and WMO contributions.

through over 8,700 platforms across 13 global ocean observing networks.¹⁵⁶ The Ocean Biodiversity Information System continued to expand, incorporating over one million new records per month.¹⁵⁷ Data collection on average marine acidity in relation to indicator 14.3.1 of Goal 14 continued to grow.¹⁵⁸ Efforts also continued to enhance the monitoring of harmful algal blooms.¹⁵⁹

51. The IOC Assembly invited its member States to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to standardize ocean data sharing practices by establishing national data-sharing policies, regulations and permissions for all ocean-related activities conducted in areas within their jurisdiction, including through the inclusion of the provisions of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Data Policy and Terms of Use in licensing and permitting within their jurisdiction.¹⁶⁰ An International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) inter-sessional working group was established to advance ocean data sharing.¹⁶¹ The Assembly also requested GOOS to undertake consultations, including with the Division, on the feasibility of revising the 2010 publication of the Division on marine scientific research.¹⁶²

52. Efforts to strengthen the ocean science-policy interface continued, including through promoting ocean literacy, enhancing the uptake of science in decision-making and tailored capacity-building.¹⁶³ The Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (Regular Process), launched a multistakeholder review process for the forthcoming third World Ocean Assessment.¹⁶⁴ The finalized Assessment is scheduled to be submitted to the General Assembly towards the end of 2025. The Group of Experts of the Regular Process commenced the preparation of thematic summaries in consultation with relevant United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental organizations, with a view to providing policy-relevant information to support decision-making at all levels.¹⁶⁵ Following the launch of the fourth cycle of the Regular Process (2026-2030),¹⁶⁶ the development of a draft programme of work and preliminary resource requirements was initiated.¹⁶⁷

53. The IOC Assembly established a working group to provide scientific and technical advice on matters related to the implementation of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction within its mandate.¹⁶⁸ It also adopted a detailed implementation plan to support the operationalization of its revised Capacity Development Strategy.¹⁶⁹

B. Conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources

54. In its 2025 review of the state of world marine fishery resources, FAO introduced a new methodology for assessing the state of marine fish stocks, which it

¹⁵⁶ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁵⁷ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

¹⁵⁸ IAEA, IOC-UNESCO and PICES contribution.

¹⁵⁹ IAEA, IOC-UNESCO, PICES and UNEP contributions.

¹⁶⁰ See IOC-UNESCO, document IOC/A-33/Decisions, decision A-33/3.4.2.

¹⁶¹ See IOC-UNESCO, document IOC/A-33/Decisions, decision A-33/3.4.2.

¹⁶² See IOC-UNESCO, document IOC/A-33/Decisions, decision A-33/4.5.3.

¹⁶³ FAO, IAEA, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, NFAO, PICES, UNEP, UNIDO and UNOOSA contributions.

¹⁶⁴ See <https://www.un.org/regularprocess/woa3>.

¹⁶⁵ See A/78/77, annex II.

¹⁶⁶ See General Assembly resolution 79/144, para. 333

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., para. 333 and 335.

¹⁶⁸ IOC-UNESCO Decision A-33/4.7.

¹⁶⁹ IOC-UNESCO contribution. See also IOC-UNESCO, decision A-33/4.2.

termed the most comprehensive, reliable and participatory assessment of the status of global fisheries resources to date.¹⁷⁰ The proportion of marine stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels was estimated to be 64.5 per cent, with 35.5 per cent of stocks classified as overfished. The percentage of overfished stocks continued to increase at a rate of approximately 1 per cent per year.

55. A wide range of actions was taken to improve fisheries management and strengthen the fisheries sector. At the global level, 2025 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Fish Stocks Agreement, a milestone that was reflected upon during the eighteenth round of informal consultations of States Parties to the Fish Stocks Agreement.¹⁷¹ FAO continued its wide-ranging activities to strengthen fisheries management at the global, regional and national levels, including through enhanced cooperation and coordination and capacity-building.¹⁷²

56. At the WTO, efforts remained ongoing to agree on additional provisions on fisheries subsidies.¹⁷³ Cooperation between the Secretariat to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and fisheries organizations, including FAO, continued with a view to ensuring better implementation of that Convention in the fisheries sector.¹⁷⁴ The Bycatch Mitigation Initiative of the International Whaling Commission continued to work on monitoring and mitigating cetacean bycatch in fisheries around the world.¹⁷⁵ UNCTAD undertook work in relation to fisheries access agreements and the ocean economy and fisheries, particularly in relation to the decarbonization of the fisheries sector.¹⁷⁶

57. At the regional level, regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, as well as other regional fishery bodies, continued efforts to improve the management of fisheries, including through ecosystem-based management of fisheries,¹⁷⁷ the use of area-based management tools,¹⁷⁸ the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems,¹⁷⁹ combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,¹⁸⁰ the

¹⁷⁰ Rishi Sharma, Manuel Barange, Vera Agostini, Pedro Barros, Nicolas L. Gutierrez, Marcelo Vasconcellos, Diana Fernandez Reguera, Céline Tiffay, and Polina Levontin, eds., *Review of the state of world marine fishery resources – 2025*, FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 721 (Rome 2025), <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd5538en>. 2,570 disaggregated stocks were assessed, compared to around 450 aggregated stocks used in previous FAO assessments to provide a more representative and granulated coverage.

¹⁷¹ <https://www.un.org/oceancapacity/content/unfsa-informal-consultations-states-parties>.

¹⁷² FAO contribution. FAO reported on its assistance in relation to the review and enhancement of fisheries legislation, development of technical skills at the national level, combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, support for small-scale fisheries through the implementation of the small-scale fisheries guidelines, implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries, social protection and the safety of fishing and fishing vessels, gender equality and women's empowerment in fisheries and aquaculture, monitoring of progress for SDG indicators, protection of the marine environment including from marine debris and discarded fishing gear, protection of marine biological diversity and marine science. It also highlighted its role in respect of enhancing coordination and cooperation at the regional level through regional fishery bodies.

¹⁷³ See https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_e.htm.

¹⁷⁴ CITES and FAO contributions.

¹⁷⁵ IWC contribution.

¹⁷⁶ UNCTAD contribution.

¹⁷⁷ CCAMLR, NAFO, NASCO, NEAFC, SEAFO and SPRFMO contributions.

¹⁷⁸ CCAMLR, NEAFC, NEAFC and SPRFMO contributions. For example, in 2024 NEAFC became the first RFMO to identify an “Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure (OECM)” under the CBD framework.

¹⁷⁹ CCAMLR, NEAFC, SEAFO and SPRFMO contributions.

¹⁸⁰ NEAFC and SPRFMO contributions.

consideration or adoption of climate change measures,¹⁸¹ improved application of the precautionary approach¹⁸² and performance reviews.¹⁸³

C. Protection and preservation of the marine environment and conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity

58. The reporting period saw progress in efforts to halt and reverse marine biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and restore ocean health and resilience.

59. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its sixteenth meeting, adopted several important decisions, including on the establishment of the Cali Fund for the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources;¹⁸⁴ new modalities for describing, and for modifying the description of, ecologically or biologically significant marine areas;¹⁸⁵ and marine and coastal biodiversity and island biodiversity.¹⁸⁶ In addition, the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity took steps to facilitate the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including through the development of an online reporting tool.¹⁸⁷

60. The Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction generated momentum for new initiatives, such as the creation by the IHO of a global digital map of Marine Protected Areas.¹⁸⁸ The International Whaling Commission adopted a resolution on synergies with the Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora agreed to submit for consideration by its Conference of the Parties a number of decisions concerning marine species, including the preparation of a revision to the resolution on introduction from the sea, aimed at providing clarifications and integrating new elements on that Convention's implementation regarding trade in species taken in areas beyond national jurisdiction.¹⁹⁰

61. The first part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, was held in late 2024, with the second part held in August 2025 adjourning without consensus on a text of the instrument. The Committee agreed to resume negotiations at a future time to be announced.

¹⁸¹ CCAMLR, NAFO, NEAFC and SPRFMO contributions.

¹⁸² NAFO contribution. In 2024, NAFO adopted a comprehensive revision to its Precautionary Approach Framework (PAF).

¹⁸³ NAFO, NASCO and SPRFMO contributions. NAFO agreed to initiate a new process for the next performance review of the Organization, beginning in 2025. A number of recommendations arising from the 'Third Performance Review' of NASCO (conducted in 2022 / 2023) and subsequent follow-up work remained outstanding and were addressed at the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of NASCO in June 2025. A second Performance Review of SPRFMO was undertaken in 2024 and an implementation Working Group was established, and its terms of reference were adopted by the Commission.

¹⁸⁴ CBD Decision 16/2.

¹⁸⁵ CBD Decision 16/16.

¹⁸⁶ CBD Decision 16/17.

¹⁸⁷ SCBD contribution.

¹⁸⁸ IHO contribution.

¹⁸⁹ Resolution 2024-2; see also IWC contribution.

¹⁹⁰ CITES contribution.

62. In terms of hazardous chemicals and waste, 2025 marked the entry into force of several amendments to annex A of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants,¹⁹¹ annexes II, VIII and IX of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal,¹⁹² and annexes A and B to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.¹⁹³ Part I of Annex A to the Stockholm Convention was further amended to list three additional organic pollutants.¹⁹⁴ The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported the establishment of additional measures regarding the discharge of Advanced Liquid Processing System-treated water stored at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station to allow countries to engage directly in sampling.¹⁹⁵

63. Regarding pollution from vessels, a package of measures to manage discharge water from Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems on board ships was agreed by the Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic.¹⁹⁶

64. The IMO MEPC approved amendments to the “Revised guidelines for the reduction of underwater radiated noise from shipping to address adverse impacts on marine life”,¹⁹⁷ and an “Action Plan for the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping”,¹⁹⁸ while the ISA progressed its work on environmental threshold values, including for underwater noise, with a view to ensuring the effective protection of the marine environment from potential harmful effects of exploitation activities in the Area.¹⁹⁹

65. At the regional level, developments included the adoption by the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic of an amendment to expand its maritime area by over 2.5 million square kilometres, encompassing areas both within and beyond national jurisdiction.²⁰⁰

66. Within several organizations, work continued on area-based management tools, including marine protected areas. MEPC designated the Nusa Penida Islands and Gili Matra Islands in the Lombok Strait as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area.²⁰¹ The FAO published guidance on the potential for identifying other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in areas under the jurisdiction of regional fishery bodies,²⁰² while the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission reported an OECM, based on its areas closed to bottom fishing to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems, to the Convention on Biological Diversity.²⁰³ In addition, the tenth meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas adopted guidelines for Cetacean-sensitive

¹⁹¹ BRS contribution.

¹⁹² Idem.

¹⁹³ Secretariat of the Minamata Convention contribution.

¹⁹⁴ BRS contribution.

¹⁹⁵ IAEA contribution.

¹⁹⁶ OSPAR contribution.

¹⁹⁷ IMO contribution; see also IMO circular MEPC.1/Circ.906/Rev.1.

¹⁹⁸ IMO contribution; see also <https://www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/pages/whatsnew-2032.aspx>.

¹⁹⁹ ISA contribution.

²⁰⁰ OSPAR contribution; see also

https://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/63489/annex17_amendment_convention_enlargement-macaronesia.pdf.

²⁰¹ IMO contribution.

²⁰² FAO contribution; see also FAO, *Report of the workshop on fisheries-related other effective area-based conservation measures in areas under the jurisdiction of regional fisheries bodies – Rome, 22–24 January* (Rome, 2024), available at <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3102en>.

²⁰³ NEAFC contribution; see also “NEAFC Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures” at www.neafc.org/oecm.

Maritime Spatial Planning.²⁰⁴ The Council of the ISA adopted the revised standardized procedure for the development, establishment and review of regional environmental management plans.²⁰⁵

VIII. Strengthening international cooperation and coordination

67. With a view to accelerating multilateral ocean action, including toward the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14, the inter-agency mechanism UN-Oceans continued to strengthen its cooperation and coordination efforts on oceans and coastal issues.²⁰⁶ Regular meetings were held with its 31 members for the sharing of information and best practices and towards identifying synergies and opportunities for cooperation, in accordance with its annual Work Programme and the statement of commitments in relation to the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.²⁰⁷

68. UN-Oceans members continued to support ocean-related processes and highlighted its role as a multidisciplinary partnership that can leverage synergies, build on previous achievements and maximize the use of limited resources, at various side events on the margins of intergovernmental meetings,²⁰⁸ including the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference,²⁰⁹ the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change²¹⁰ and the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.²¹¹

69. Efforts to strengthen international cooperation and coordination on ocean issues continued at both the global and regional levels, including in relation to marine pollution,²¹² marine environmental protection,²¹³ ocean-related aspects of climate change,²¹⁴ maritime safety and security,²¹⁵ illegal trafficking in protected species,²¹⁶

²⁰⁴ ASCOBANS contribution.

²⁰⁵ ISA contribution; advance version available as ISBA/30/C/L.3/Rev.1.

²⁰⁶ CITES, IAEA, ISA, UNCTAD and UNFCCC contributions. See also https://www.un.org/Depts/los/coop_coor/home_en.htm.

²⁰⁷ Available at

www.un.org/Depts/los/coop_coor/documents/2025UNOceansWorkProgramme.pdf.

²⁰⁸ See www.un.org/Depts/los/coop_coor/actvs_en.htm.

²⁰⁹ The UN-Oceans side event at the 2025 UNOC on the theme, “*UN-Oceans as a mechanism to mobilize multilateral ocean action and amplify collective impacts toward the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14*”, highlighted UN-Oceans members’ efforts to collaborate and build synergies in support of States’ efforts to achieve Goal 14. See www.un.org/Depts/los/coop_coor/actvs_en.htm.

²¹⁰ At the UN-Oceans side event at UNFCCC COP 29 on the theme “*Striving for Ambitious Ocean-Based Action: How UN-Oceans can support States in scaling up ocean-related actions, including in the context of the next round of nationally determined contributions*”, UN-Oceans members presented how their mandates and expertise could be leveraged to support States in scaling up ocean-climate action and build on ocean-related NDC guidelines. See www.un.org/Depts/los/coop_coor/actvs_en.htm.

²¹¹ The UN-Oceans side event at CBD COP 16 on the theme “*Implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework: How UN-Oceans can support States in meeting their obligations under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework with a focus on the ocean-biodiversity-climate nexus, including development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans*” highlighted the contributions of UN-Oceans members to the implementation of the KMGBF, particularly its goals and targets related to the ocean-biodiversity-climate nexus. See www.un.org/Depts/los/coop_coor/actvs_en.htm.

²¹² BRS, FAO, IAEA, IMO, IOC-UNESCO and UNEP contributions.

²¹³ IMO and OSPAR contributions.

²¹⁴ ILO, SCBD, UNCTAD, UNFCCC and WMO contributions.

²¹⁵ DPPA, IMO, UNODC and WMO contributions.

²¹⁶ CITES and FAO contributions.

people smuggling and human trafficking,²¹⁷ safety at sea,²¹⁸ protection of submarine cables,²¹⁹ fisheries management,²²⁰ illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,²²¹ ocean science,²²² the blue economy,²²³ and the development of hydrographic charts.²²⁴ The declaration adopted at the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference affirmed the commitment of States to international cooperation and coordination on ocean matters, including with respect to climate change.²²⁵

70. Conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity was a particular focus of international cooperation and coordination efforts.²²⁶ An intersessional meeting of regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies under the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue was convened to progress regional cooperation in relation to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.²²⁷ The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Executive Secretary of that Convention to cooperate with relevant organizations on a range of issues, including the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.²²⁸

71. Cooperation and coordination across the fisheries sector continued.²²⁹ The second phase of the Common Oceans program, including a focus on deep-sea fisheries management, continued, including the promotion of regional and inter-regional cooperation.²³⁰ At the regional level, the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation renewed its memorandum of understanding with the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources,²³¹ while the Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission and the Nairobi Convention established a cooperation agreement in the southwest Indian Ocean.²³² The FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme continued to support cooperation agreements globally.²³³

72. ISA formalized cooperative arrangements with the ILO and the FAO, ensuring effective coordination on areas of mandate overlap.²³⁴

IX. Capacity-building and technical assistance

73. The need for capacity-building and technical assistance continued to be at the forefront of discussions among States. Through its capacity-building programmes, the Division provided information, advice and assistance to States and intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, including by facilitating

²¹⁷ UNODC contribution.

²¹⁸ ILO, IOM and UNHCR contributions.

²¹⁹ ITU contribution.

²²⁰ FAO, ILO, NAFO, SEAFO and SPRFMO contributions.

²²¹ FAO, ILO, IMO, NEAFC and SPRFMO contributions.

²²² FAO, IMO, IOC-UNESCO and UNFCCC contributions.

²²³ ECLAC and UNCTAD contributions.

²²⁴ IHO contribution.

²²⁵ See General Assembly resolution 79/314, para. 11, 29 and 30(g).

²²⁶ CITES, FAO, ISA, IWC, OSPAR, SCBD and UNEP contributions.

²²⁷ FAO, PICES and SCBD contributions.

²²⁸ SCBD contribution; see also CBD/COP/DEC/16/17.

²²⁹ FAO, NAFO, NEAFC and SEAFO contributions.

²³⁰ FAO and NEAFC contributions.

²³¹ SPRFMO contribution.

²³² FAO contribution.

²³³ FAO contribution.

²³⁴ ISA contribution.

technical assistance projects and fellowships and by participating in conferences, meetings, workshops and training events.²³⁵

74. The twenty-fifth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea focused on “Capacity building and the transfer of marine technology: New developments, approaches and challenges”.²³⁶

75. The Division continued to assist developing countries in implementing UNCLOS and its implementing agreements through programmes of assistance, with funding support of a number of Member States.²³⁷

76. The Division continued to implement a programme of activities to promote a better understanding of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and prepare for its entry into force.²³⁸

77. The Division continued its collaboration with the World Bank and other partners to deliver the Ocean Governance Training Programme²³⁹ through online trainings, e-learning courses and an in-person Global Ocean Governance Workshop held in June 2025 hosted by the FAO. It also provided a customized national capacity-building programme in ocean affairs and the law of the sea,²⁴⁰ and continued its cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to deliver briefings on ocean affairs and the law of the sea to New York-based delegates.

78. The Division continued to administer nine voluntary trust funds to assist developing States with the implementation of UNCLOS and its implementing agreements, including by facilitating participation in ocean-related meetings, intergovernmental processes, and the settlement of disputes through the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.²⁴¹

79. The Division developed and implemented its capacity-building programmes in coordination and cooperation with beneficiary Governments and donors, as well as relevant national, regional and international organizations and entities, including FAO, IMO, ISA, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNODC and the World Bank. Relevant United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) were also consulted and the delivery of certain activities benefited from the support of UNCT members. The Division also contributed to the development and delivery of capacity-building and technical cooperation activities by other entities.

80. Many organizations and entities also reported on activities to assist developing States in sustainably managing ocean spaces, resources and activities, including through the implementation of UNCLOS and related instruments, as well as through ongoing engagement with key regional stakeholders.²⁴²

²³⁵ See www.un.org/oceancapacity and https://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/DOALOSListActivities1Sep2024-31Aug2025.pdf.

²³⁶ See https://www.un.org/depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm.

²³⁷ See <http://www.un.org/oceancapacity> for resources and assistance available through the programmes of assistance. For informational videos see:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtPzEe61Sw24Y7HTFv2jwE1uZGs_b7anH&si=7vyoz2biRqAKywqU.

²³⁸ See www.un.org/bbnjagreement.

²³⁹ See <https://www.un.org/oceancapacity/WorldBank>.

²⁴⁰ See <https://www.un.org/oceancapacity/SA>.

²⁴¹ See www.un.org/oceancapacity/tf and https://www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/SGReportTrustFunds1August2024-31July2025.pdf.

²⁴² CCAMLR, CITES, FAO, IAEA, IHO, ILO, IMO, IOC-UNESCO, ISA, IOM, ITLOS, IWC,

Fellowships

81. During the reporting period, the Division implemented the United Nations-Nippon Foundation Fellowship on Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, marking its twentieth session, as well as the Strategic Needs Fellowship and the new Ocean Governance Fellowship for Small Island Developing States. Together, these programmes benefited 34 professionals from developing States working directly on ocean affairs and the law of the sea.²⁴³ The programmes and related activities were enriched by the support and specialized knowledge of academic host institutions, experts, and staff from United Nations specialized agencies.

82. The Division also held an alumni meeting in Nice, France, to coincide with the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference, bringing together nine former fellows from across regions.

83. The Division also continued to administer and implement the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship, with a national of Cameroon being the twenty-sixth awardee.²⁴⁴

X. Conclusions

84. UNCLOS has been heralded as a testament to multilateralism in action. The Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction represents a significant further achievement. Continued efforts towards the full and effective implementation of UNCLOS and all three implementing agreements, as well as the other ocean and law of the sea related instruments, remain essential to address the global challenges facing our ocean for people, planet and prosperity.

85. The thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of Fish Stocks Agreement provides an important opportunity for States Parties to promote its full and effective implementation, individually and through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements. Realizing the full potential of these instruments and other relevant processes, including through tailored capacity building programmes, will require sustained collaboration and scaling up investment across all levels.

86. Leveraging synergies between multilateral processes on the ocean, biodiversity, and climate change calls for increased attention. In this regard, the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Obligations of States in respect of climate change* highlights the critical importance of the protection of the climate system and other parts of the environment from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. The global and regional trends in rising temperatures, sea level, and acidity levels reinforce the urgency of ocean-climate action, including advancing integrated, science-based solutions.

87. Efforts to advance marine science and strengthen the science-policy interface have continued to gain traction, underpinned by the renewed momentum of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. The launch of the fourth cycle of the Regular Process (2026–2030) is poised to support these efforts further.

88. Progress was made in efforts to halt and reverse marine biodiversity loss and restore ocean health, with the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas

NAFO, SCBD, SEAFO, SPRFMO, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNFCCC, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNODC, and UNOOSA contributions.

²⁴³ For more information see <https://www.un.org/oceancapacity/UNNF>.

²⁴⁴ For more information about the Fellowship see <https://www.un.org/oceancapacity/HSA>.

beyond National Jurisdiction serving as a catalyst for new initiatives. Further steps were also taken by several regional and global organizations towards addressing pollution from various sources and advancing work on area-based management tools. However, additional efforts are needed to translate commitments already made into tangible action.

89. Maritime safety and security are the linchpins for global navigation and trade and remain essential to the global economy, livelihoods, and sustainable development. While progress is being made, including by taking advantage of technological developments, the continued challenge to maritime security and safety from crimes at sea and other threats requires sustained attention and action.

90. Immediate, ambitious and coherent action across all ocean-related sectors is needed to ensure a healthy, productive and resilient ocean, for communities who depend on the sea for their wellbeing, livelihoods, trade, food security and nutrition, as well as cultural and social dimensions. The human dimension of the sea continues to need greater attention. Additional efforts are required to address persistent challenges to the working conditions of fishers and seafarers. A humanitarian approach to distress situations and the strengthening of search and rescue capacity is fundamental. Strategies to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons and enhance safe and regular migration pathways remain essential. Further efforts are needed to address inequalities and increase the participation of women in ocean-related sectors.

91. The momentum generated by the 2025 United Nations Oceans Conference presents a clear opportunity to enhance further international cooperation and coordination, across the ocean mandates of relevant organizations and through UN-Oceans. Collaborative and cross-sectoral action, including for promoting the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, addressing ocean-related aspects of climate change, and advancing ocean science and technology, can amplify the collective impacts of efforts to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 14.
