

UN-OHRLLS Contribution to Secretary-General's Report on the Oceans and the Law of the Sea

Theme "Ocean Science and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development".

It is suggested that the contributions could address:

- (i) Advancing ocean science and addressing gaps in knowledge and ocean science;*
- (ii) UN Decade for Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;*
- (iii) The cross-cutting role of ocean science in SDG 14 of the 2030 Agenda;*
- (iv) the integration of tradition knowledge in ocean research*
- (v) strengthening ocean science in developing countries*

Background

OHRLLS is mandated with supporting the implementation of the three internationally agreed programmes of actions for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, respectively the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA), the Vienna Programme of Action VPoA), and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. All three programmes the contribution of science, technology and innovation to poverty alleviation, promotion of structural transformation and sustainable development.

SDG 14.7 calls for strengthening ocean science in developing countries, in particular in SIDS and LDCs including increase in scientific knowledge, development of research capacity and transfer of marine technology. These targets reflect the commitments made in SAMOA Pathway as well as the Istanbul Programme of Action.

SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs require enhanced access to capacity building, international coordination and partnerships to promote ocean science research, data and statistics to support sustainable and effective development of marine resources and uses of the oceans and for resilience building.

SIDS

With regards to marine scientific research and technology transfer, the SAMOA Pathway highlighted its critical importance in a number of areas including in addressing climate change and ocean acidification; ocean conservation as well as sustainable use of the oceans and its resources.

Almost all SIDS have ocean spaces that are larger than their terrestrial spaces and many SIDS have made efforts in conserving the vast ocean. SIDS are heavily dependent on ocean, coasts and marine resources for their economic growth. The Exclusive Economic Zones of SIDS are an important resource for fisheries, transport and tourism, and there are also emerging opportunities for deep sea minerals, energy and bioprospecting. SIDS will need the continued support of the international community and strengthened cooperation to develop their national capacity to realize the full potential of their EEZ's marine resources.

The upcoming one-day high-level review of the SAMOA Pathway which, will take place on 27 September 2019 in New York, provides an invaluable opportunity to highlight the important role of ocean science and transfer of technology in achieving the objectives of the SAMOA Pathway, the BPoA and MSI, as well as the SDGs.

The SAMOA Pathway calls for action to develop the technological capacity of SIDS, including through the establishment of dedicated regional oceanographic centres and the provision of technical assistance, for the delimitation of their maritime areas and the preparation of submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.¹ The SAMOA Pathway also calls to enhance and implement the monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing vessels so as to effectively prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including through institutional capacity-building at the appropriate levels.²

To address the causes of ocean acidification, the SAMOA Pathway calls for enhanced cooperation at all levels and to further study and minimize its impacts, including through information-sharing, regional workshops, the integration of scientists from small island developing States into international research teams, steps to make marine ecosystems more resilient to the impacts of ocean acidification and the possible development of a strategy for all small island developing States on ocean acidification.³

To address the issue of invasive species the SAMOA Pathway calls to improve efforts to eradicate and control invasive alien species, including through the provision of support for research on and the development of new technologies by expanding collaboration and supporting existing regional and international structures.⁴

In May 2014, in New York, in preparation for the Third International Conference on SIDS in partnership with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and UN-DOALOS convened an Expert Group Meeting on significance of Marine Science and Technology for SIDS

¹ SAMOA pathway para. 58(f)

² Ibid para.58(g)

³ Ibid para. 58(n)

⁴ Ibid para. 95

and the importance of Capacity Building and Marine Technologies Transfer to SIDS to Support Sustainable Development.

The EGM made recommendations related to capacity building and technology transfer to SIDS; enhanced cooperation and effective implementation relevant frameworks for marine science and transfer of marine technology to SIDS. The recommendations emphasizes the need to develop targeted SIDS capacities and scientific know-how on marine science, research and technology and (ii) to capture SIDS traditional knowledge as a major resource for tackling climate change, resilience building and developing adaptation strategies.

The Report also underscores that marine scientific data and information collected, including in particularly those collected in areas under SIDS national jurisdiction, should be carried out pursuant to the provisions of UNCLOS and Article 244 in particular, and that the transfer of knowledge resulting from marine scientific research be disseminated to SIDS.

For full set of recommendations and Report of the EGM see:
http://unohrrls.org/UserFiles/EGM_report_recommendations_fin.pdf

LDCs

LDCs, especially coastal and small island LDCs, require strengthened capacity on ocean science, especially as related to implementing SDG14. This includes observation systems, scientific equipment, laboratory capacity and capabilities, training, analysis of human impact on marine ecosystems, and scientific research and assessments, among others.

Strengthened support is needed to address the range of steps in mitigating pollution of marine eco-systems including from land-based activities. This includes support for carrying out impact assessments, assessing the science-policy interface, and development of appropriate policy options.

There are significant data gaps on the indicators of the SDG14, as well as related SDGs. Addressing these gaps requires strengthening the capacities of national statistics offices, as well as more detailed underlying data in oceanographic and other relevant institutes.

LDCs require assistance to ensure that they are able to fully benefit new technologies in ocean science, such as AI, blockchain. The recent establishment and full operationalization of the Technology for LDCs will go a long way in helping this group of countries address their STI needs.

LLDCs

The oceans are common heritage to mankind and therefore their conservation and sustainable use are important to all including the landlocked states. Initiatives to implementation of SDG 14 should therefore include the landlocked countries.

The participation of the landlocked countries in ocean science is important but these countries are still marginalized from taking part in ocean science and other related activities. This is in part due to their lack of capacity and hindered access to the sea. There is therefore the need to build the capacity of the landlocked countries to participate in ocean science to ensure that no one is left behind.

Whilst the UNCLOS gives the landlocked states the right to access and utilise the oceans and its resources, the participation of these countries in the blues economy and in norm setting relating to the oceans is quite limited.

Enhanced participation of LLDCs in marine research should also be one of the key sectors for new partnerships. The UNCLOS provides for the participation of landlocked and geographically disadvantaged States in marine scientific research being conducted in neighbouring coastal States' waters.

OHRLLS in collaboration with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) organized a side event on Enhancing the role of Women in marine deep-sea scientific research to achieve the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the vulnerable countries. The event was organized in the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women on 22 March 2018 and was aimed at raising awareness among the vulnerable countries and discuss ways to improve full and equal access and participation of women in marine deep-sea scientific research through capacity-building.

Recommendations from the meeting included the need for enhanced outreach initiatives including through regional organizations like the African Union and inclusion of marine deep-sea scientific research in school curricula to increase awareness amongst the youth.

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