
Advanced and Unedited Reporting Material

(70th Session of the General Assembly, 26 August 2015)

Oceans and the law of the sea**

Summary

The present report, which covers the period from 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015, is submitted pursuant to paragraph 309 of General Assembly resolution 69/245, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report on developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including the implementation of resolution 69/245, for consideration at its seventieth session. It is also being submitted to States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, pursuant to article 319 of the Convention. The report provides information on the status of the Convention and its implementing Agreements and the work of the bodies established under the Convention; settlement of disputes; State practice regarding maritime space; international shipping activities; people at sea; maritime security; the 2030 agenda for sustainable development; marine science and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects; marine living resources; marine biological diversity; pressures on the marine environment; management tools; oceans and climate change and ocean acidification; small island developing States and land-locked developing States; capacity-building and international cooperation and coordination.

** Owing to the page limit, this report contains a summary of the most important recent developments and selected parts of contributions by relevant agencies, programmes and bodies.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is prepared immediately prior to the adoption of a new development agenda entitled: “Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development”.¹ This agenda is based, *inter alia*, on 17 sustainable development goals and their associated targets, including Goal 14 on “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.” It recognizes that social and economic development depends on the sustainable management of the planet’s natural resources, including oceans and seas.

2. The report highlightss activities, including the adoption of measures and development of programmes, undertaken by the United Nations System and other intergovernmental organizations relating to General Assembly resolution 69/245. It also provides an overview of main developments and issues in ocean affairs and the law of the sea. Its purpose is to assist the General Assembly in its annual consideration and review of these and other developments. The report should be read in conjunction with: (a) the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, which addressed the topic of focus of the sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (the “Informal Consultative Process”) (A/70/74); (b) the report on the work of the Informal Consultative Process at its sixteenth meeting (A/70/78); (c) the letter dated 13 February 2015 from the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (the “BBNJ Working Group”) to the President of the General Assembly (A/69/780); (d) the report of the twenty-fifth Meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (SPLOS/287); (e) the letter dated 7 July 2015 from the Co-Chairs 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 addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/70/112), as well as other relevant documents, such as the statements by the Chair of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on progress of work in the Commission (CLCS/85, 86 and 88).

3. The report should be read in conjunction with the more detailed contributions provided by the United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and bodies, as well as other intergovernmental organizations,² for which the Secretary-General expresses his gratitude.

II. Status of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing Agreements, work of the bodies established under the Convention, and peaceful settlement of disputes

4. As reaffirmed by the General Assembly, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“the Convention” or “UNCLOS”) sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried and is of strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector.

¹ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>.

² All contributions to this report are available on the Division’s website at: www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm.

5. As at 31 August 2015, the number of parties to the Convention rose to 167, those to the 1994 Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention of 10 December 1982 to 147, and those to the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement) to 82, bringing these instruments closer to the goal of universal participation called for by the General Assembly.³

6. The General Assembly has repeatedly called upon States to ensure that any declarations or statements that they made or make when signing, ratifying or acceding to UNCLOS do not purport to exclude or modify the legal effect of the provisions of the Convention and to withdraw any such declarations or statements.⁴ So far, none of such declarations or statements has been withdrawn.⁵

A. Work of the bodies established under the Convention

7. The bodies established under UNCLOS have continued to facilitate its implementation, as recognized and called for by the General Assembly. The report of the twenty-fifth meeting of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in June 2015, is contained in SPLOS/287 (see also para. 14).

8. *International Seabed Authority.* As a result of growing interest in minerals of the deep seabed, as at 31 August 2015, 27 plans of work for exploration in the Area have been approved by the Authority, contributing to a further increase in its workload in the area of contracts administration and supervision.⁶ At its twenty-first session in July 2015, the Authority continued its work on a draft framework for the regulation of the exploitation of the Area, for which the Council adopted a list of priority deliverables. The Council also adopted a decision relating to the procedures and criteria for the extension of an approved plan of work for exploration.⁷ With the first seven contracts approved by the Authority due to expire between March 2016 and March 2017, this decision also expanded on the requirements to be met by contractors at the time of application for extensions, as well as transitional measures pending approval by the Council. At the same session, the Assembly adopted a decision regarding the first periodic review of the international regime of the Area pursuant to article 154 of the Convention, and the terms of reference for this review.⁸

9. In March 2015, the Authority and the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC) held a workshop to address the potential for interaction between the laying of submarine cables and the exploration for and exploitation of the resources of the Area, with a view to ensuring that activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction are carried out in accordance with the “due regard” obligations contained in the Convention.⁹ The

³ See treaties.un.org. The European Union is party to all three treaties.

⁴ A/59/62, chapter II, section B, paras. 12-13.

⁵ <https://treaties.un.org>.

⁶ ISA contribution.

⁷ ISBA/21/C/19.

⁸ ISBA/21/A/9. For other activities of the Authority, see para. 67.

⁹ See articles 87 and 147 of the Convention.

workshop suggested that the Authority and ICPC could facilitate communication between contractors and cable owners.¹⁰

10. *The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea*. In April 2015, the Tribunal delivered its advisory opinion in the *Request for an advisory opinion submitted by the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission* and a special chamber of the Tribunal prescribed provisional measures in the *Dispute concerning Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in the Atlantic Ocean*.¹¹ In July 2015, Italy submitted a request to the Tribunal for the prescription of provisional measures under article 290, paragraph 5, of the Convention in a dispute with India over the incident involving the *MV Enrica Lexie*.¹² During the reporting period, the Tribunal also continued to deliver its capacity-building and training programme on dispute settlement under the Convention.¹³

11. *Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf*. During the reporting period, the Commission met¹⁴ and adopted two sets of recommendations, bringing the total number of recommendations to 22. So far, however, there have only been a limited number of deposits of information and data permanently describing the outer limits of the continental shelf on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission, pursuant to article 76, paragraph 9, of the Convention,¹⁵ a situation which has implications also for the delineation of the limits of the Area.

12. As at 31 August 2015, four new submissions, two revised submissions and an amended submission were made, bringing the total number of submissions to 81, including revised submissions.

13. Consequently, the workload and backlog of the Commission¹⁶ continued to increase. The time period between the receipt of a submission and the establishment of a subcommission to consider it has surpassed six years, and is expected to further increase.¹⁷ This poses practical challenges for submitting States, which have to maintain the data, software and required expertise.

14. The twenty-fifth Meeting of States Parties adopted a decision regarding the conditions of service of the members of the Commission (SPLOS/286),¹⁸ which are interrelated with the growing workload of the Commission and the increasing demands on its members. The Meeting urged the General Assembly to take appropriate and necessary measures to resolve the matter of working space, and to take any necessary measures with a view to providing medical insurance coverage to Commission members from developing States, and decided to continue the consideration of other conditions of

¹⁰ *Submarine Cables and Deep Seabed Mining . Advancing Common Interests and Addressing UNCLOS "Due Regard" Obligations* (2015). ISA Technical Study No. 14.

¹¹ ITLOS contribution.

¹² www.itlos.org/cases/list-of-cases.

¹³ ITLOS contribution.

¹⁴ CLCS/85, CLCS/86 and CLCS/88.

¹⁵ Mexico in respect of the western polygon in the Gulf of Mexico (2009), Ireland in the area abutting the Porcupine Abyssal Plain (2009), the Philippines in the Benham Rise Region (2012), and Australia (2012).

¹⁶ As at 31 August 2015, the number of submissions not yet under active consideration by the Commission stood at 49.

¹⁷ For information on the dates of deposit of submissions and establishment of subcommissions to consider them see: www.un.org/depts/los/clcs_new/commission_submissions.htm.

¹⁸ A/69/71/Add.1, fn 11, and CLCS/88.

service of the members of the Commission. The twenty-fifth Meeting also elected Nenad Leder (Croatia) to fill a vacancy which had occurred in the Commission.

B. Peaceful settlement of disputes

15. As recognized by the General Assembly, the Convention contributes to the maintenance of peace and the strengthening of security, including by providing compulsory procedures entailing binding decisions. During the reporting period, in addition to the work carried out by the Tribunal¹⁹ (see para. 10), there were five cases related to law of the sea issues before the International Court of Justice, which rendered orders in two cases and held public hearings in another case,²⁰ while the arbitral tribunals established under annex VII to the Convention rendered a number of orders and the award in the *Chagos Marine Protected Area Arbitration (Mauritius v United Kingdom)*.²¹

III. Maritime spaces

16. Under the Convention, the Secretary-General is entrusted with depository and due publicity functions to facilitate awareness of the limits of the maritime zones in which coastal States exercise sovereignty or sovereign rights and jurisdiction. To this end, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs (the “Division” or “DOALOS”), as mandated by the General Assembly, maintains facilities for the deposit by States of charts and geographical coordinates concerning maritime zones, including lines of delimitation, and gives due publicity thereto. The Division makes information on State practice available on its website, in an extensive database containing texts of national legislation on maritime zones, maritime boundary delimitation treaties and related communications.²² It gives publicity to the deposit of charts and geographical coordinates and other developments, including through Maritime Zone Notifications and the *Law of the Sea Bulletins*.²³

17. During the reporting period, a number of States deposited, pursuant to the Convention, charts or of lists of geographical coordinates of points with the Secretary-General. Many coastal States, however, have yet to meet their deposit and due-publicity obligations.

18. DOALOS continued to contribute, in collaboration with the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and other relevant organizations, to the ongoing development of product specifications for the collection, storage and dissemination of the deposited information, in order to ensure compatibility among geographic information systems, electronic nautical charts and other systems developed by those organizations.²⁴ In addition, the product specifications will assist States Parties in preparing their data in a standardized manner when fulfilling their deposit obligations under the Convention.

¹⁹ ITLOS contribution and www.itlos.org/index.php?id=35.

²⁰ ICJ contribution and www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?p1=3&p2=2.

²¹ Contribution of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and www.pca-cpa.org/showpage95e7.html?pag_id=1288.

²² See www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/index.htm.

²³ See: www.un.org/Depts/los/doalos_publications/los_bult.htm. Deposits were made, in chronological order, by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, France, Niue, Kiribati, Yemen, Fiji and Brazil.

²⁴ A report on the latest developments in the product specification is expected to be made at the 7th meeting of the IHO Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 9 to 13 November 2015, http://www.iho.int/mtg_docs/com_wg/HSSC/HSSC7/HSSC7Docs.htm.

19. The Division utilized the latest version of the product specifications for the maintenance of its geographic information system and the completion of the development of an associated geo-web portal, Oceans Explorer. The geo-web portal is intended to give publicity to the deposited information on baselines and outer limits of maritime zones via the Internet in the form of an illustrative interactive map and a list of geographic coordinates of points available for download. Prior to making the geo-web portal available online, DOALOS intends to send communications to all States Parties that made deposits, with a view to seeking a confirmation that the information to be made accessible through that portal corresponds to the information deposited.

IV. Developments relating to international shipping activities

20. International shipping, which is responsible for the carriage of approximately 90 per cent of world trade, is vital to the global economy.²⁵ The industry remains highly vulnerable to fluctuations in the global economy and has suffered recent downturns in growth in world seaborne shipments and in the world shipping fleet, freight rates and port throughput volumes.²⁶ It also remains vulnerable to threats to maritime security (see section VI).

21. The General Assembly has highlighted the need to improve maritime safety, including through the adoption and entry into force of legal instruments and other measures.²⁷ It also continues to monitor developments relating to maritime safety, in particular, with regards to hydrographic surveying and nautical charting, safety of navigation, seafarers (see paras. 29-31), and flag State implementation.

22. As recognized by the General Assembly, hydrographic surveying and nautical charting, and the work of the IHO in this regard, are critical, including for international shipping.²⁸ The coverage of Electronic Navigational Charts is approaching that of paper charts, however, greater coverage is being hindered by the lack of reliable survey data and appropriate prioritisation and funding, particularly in polar regions.²⁹ IHO has continued to support its member States to achieve an adequate coverage of nautical charts and contribute to the development of maritime spatial data infrastructures, including through capacity-building.³⁰ The International Maritime Organization (IMO) approved a strategy to fully implement e-navigation.³¹ The International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) also focused on that strategy and on implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety.³²

23. Recent legal instruments adopted by IMO to improve maritime safety, include the revised International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk,³³ which will enter into force on 1 January 2016; and the International Code of Safety for Ships using Gases or other Low-flashpoint Fuels,³⁴ along

²⁵ See: <http://www.ics-shipping.org/shipping-facts/key-facts>.

²⁶ UNCTAD, *Review of Maritime Transport 2014*. Also see UNCTAD contribution.

²⁷ A/RES/69/245, paras. 89. See also para. 108.

²⁸ A/RES/69/245, preamble and paras. 14, 136.

²⁹ IHO contribution.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ IMO contribution.

³² IMSO contribution.

³³ Resolution MSC.370(93).

³⁴ Resolution MSC.391 (95).

with amendments to make the Code mandatory, which are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2017. Furthermore, IMO approved a workplan for continued work on a goal-based standards safety level approach and approved generic guidelines for developing IMO goal-based standards. In addition, as encouraged by the General Assembly,³⁵ IMO continued its ongoing work to improve passenger ship safety.³⁶

24. With more countries focusing on opportunities for commercial navigation in the Arctic, IMO recently adopted amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) in order to make mandatory the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters, which will apply to new ships constructed after 1 January 2017.

25. In order to protect sensitive areas in a number of geographical areas in the world, including the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait, IMO adopted measures to establish new, or amend existing ship routing systems, as well as ship reporting systems (see para. 114). The International Whaling Commission (IWC) also worked with IMO on collaborative ways to minimise the occurrence of collisions between cetaceans and vessels.

26. The General Assembly has continued to emphasize the importance of flag State implementation, including with regard to international shipping rules and standards adopted by the IMO in respect of maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and the prevention and control of marine pollution (see also paras. 104-109), which have led to a significant reduction in maritime accidents and pollution incidents.³⁷ In particular, the General Assembly has encouraged all States to participate in the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme, which is expected to become mandatory from 1 January 2016.³⁸ Implementation of the mandatory IMO instruments included in the scope of the Scheme are also important for the effective implementation of provisions in the Convention.³⁹

27. With regard to port State control, the secretariats of the regional agreements have continued to cooperate in the context of joint concentrated inspection campaigns, including with regard to requirements under the 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, such as hours of rest for crew members, and the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (see para. 31).⁴⁰

V. People at sea

28. Improving the situation of people at sea has been an increasing focus of the international community. Efforts have concentrated on developing rules and standards for the better treatment of workers in the maritime sector and international migrants by sea.

³⁵ A/RES/69/245 para. 159.

³⁶ IMO contribution.

³⁷ A/RES/69/245, para. 157.

³⁸ IMO contribution.

³⁹ *Ibid.* The following mandatory IMO instruments are included in the Scheme: SOLAS 1974 and its 1988 Protocol, MARPOL, STCW 1978, the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 and its 1988 Protocol, the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969, and the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972.

⁴⁰ See <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/MSAS/Pages/PortStateControl.aspx>. Also see ILO contribution and A/RES/69/245, para. 160.

The General Assembly has addressed, inter alia, maritime labour, migration by sea, and unsafe practices at sea from a global policy perspective.

29. *Maritime workers.* About 1.5 million seafarers provide the labour force that literally keeps the shipping industry moving making seafaring one of the world's most important professions.⁴¹ The increasing and beneficial role of women in the maritime industry and the need to strengthen their capacity to engage in a productive manner in that field continues to be addressed by IMO.⁴²

30. The theme for the 2015 Day of the Seafarer, "Career at Sea", reflects continued support and recognition of the service of, and difficulties faced by, the world's seafarers, as well as an opportunity to inspire others to consider a maritime career as an opportunity for decent work.⁴³

31. Ratification and implementation of instruments relating to seafarers' role, welfare and rights contribute to improving their working conditions. As at July 2015, there were 65 parties to the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention.⁴⁴ The International Labour Organization (ILO) constituted an Ad Hoc Tripartite Maritime Committee to meet in 2016 to make proposals for the Amendment of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185).⁴⁵ IMO encouraged its member States to give effect to the 2006 Guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers in the event of a maritime accident.⁴⁶ It concluded that further consideration was needed regarding the progressive removal of legislation targeting seafarers and imposing criminal sanctions on them. It also highlighted that seafarers should be given greater training and awareness of their rights.⁴⁷ The importance of maritime education and training more generally was underlined in the "Yokohama Declaration" adopted in July 2015.⁴⁸

32. Apart from adopting a Protocol to tackle modern forms of abusive and forced labour in 2014,⁴⁹ ILO launched a Global Action Programme against forced labour and trafficking of fishers at sea in 2015 with the objective, inter alia, of facilitating capacity-building and awareness-raising campaigns for migrant fishers; assistance, recovery and rehabilitation programmes for the victims; and skill training for law enforcement officers and labour inspectors. Guidelines on flag State inspection of working and living conditions on board fishing vessels for the 2007 Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188) will be considered for adoption in September 2015.⁵⁰

⁴¹ <http://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/Pages/Day-of-the-Seafarer.aspx>.

⁴² See <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/women/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁴³ See <http://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/Pages/Day-of-the-Seafarer.aspx>.

⁴⁴ ILO contribution; http://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/codes-of-practice-and-guidelines/WCMS_218575/lang--en/index.htm.

⁴⁵ ILO document GB.323/lils/4, Outcome of the Meeting of Experts concerning the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185) (Geneva, 4-6 February 2015) at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_346449.pdf.

⁴⁶ IMO document LEG 102/12, para. 4.6. See also IMO contribution.

⁴⁷ LEG 102/12, para. 4.5.

⁴⁸ See <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/Pages/Japan%e2%80%99s-World-Maritime-Day-Parallel-Event--.aspx>.

⁴⁹ ILO contribution.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

33. *Unsafe mixed migration at sea.* Movements of refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and other migrants by sea increased dramatically in 2014 and the first half of 2015. Large numbers of refugees and migrants continued to embark on dangerous sea journeys, typically relying on smugglers (see para. 54) in the absence of safe, regular channels to escape armed conflict and persecution, to seek work opportunities, or to rejoin family. There were approximately 219,000 arrivals by sea to Europe over the course of 2014.⁵¹ Some new trends emerged in 2015: in the Mediterranean, routes underwent a significant eastward expansion. Approximately 128,000 refugees and migrants moved by sea to Europe including some 63,500 to Italy and over 63,000 to Greece.⁵² At least 1,850 people are known to have perished or gone missing at sea during the first five months of 2015.

34. In South-East Asia, approximately 63,000 people migrated by sea in the Bay of Bengal in 2014; however, the approximately 25,000 arrivals in the first quarter of 2015 represented twice the number of departures for the same period in 2014.⁵³

35. Since late March 2015, approximately 45,000 people are reported to have fled Yemen to nearby countries. A substantial proportion of these movements have been by sea, principally to Djibouti and the Federal Republic of Somalia.⁵⁴

36. Loss of life at sea and other threats to safety and human rights remains a feature of these movements; incidences of violence, exploitation, abduction and trafficking en route or on arrival remained of concern in some regions, as well as “deterrent” measures, such as “pushbacks” at sea.⁵⁵

37. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has developed a Global Initiative on Protection at Sea with the core goal of supporting action by States to reduce loss of life at sea, as well as exploitation, abuse and violence and to establish protection-sensitive responses.⁵⁶ Furthermore, “Protection at Sea” was the theme of the seventh Dialogue on Protection Challenges of the High Commissioner for Refugees in December 2014, which fostered a focused exchange of views on, inter alia, rescue and disembarkation, addressing the drivers of irregular movements by sea, as well as international cooperation to share burdens and responsibilities.⁵⁷

38. In March 2015, IMO hosted a High-Level Meeting to Address Unsafe Migration by Sea,⁵⁸ aimed at facilitating dialogue and promoting enhanced cooperation and harmonization between United Nations agencies and other stakeholders. Discussions will continue within IMO on the current legal regime and gaps that need to be addressed.⁵⁹

39. UNCLOS and IMO instruments set out the obligations of States regarding the rescue of persons in distress at sea and search and rescue services. IMO continues to assist States to become parties to the 1979 International Convention on Search and

⁵¹ UNHCR contribution.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Figures valid as at 21 June 2015.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ See <http://www.unhcr.org/5375db0d9.html>.

⁵⁷ See <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/5357caed6.html>.

⁵⁸ [http://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/Pages/High-Level-Meeting-to-Address-Unsafe-Mixed-Migration-by-Sea-\(March-2015\).aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/Pages/High-Level-Meeting-to-Address-Unsafe-Mixed-Migration-by-Sea-(March-2015).aspx).

⁵⁹ LEG 102/12, para. 11.35 and 11.37; IMO contribution.

Rescue, and to establish/improve search and rescue services, as well as build up cooperation.⁶⁰ It has also recently encouraged the promotion and dissemination of new industry guidance on large-scale rescue operations at sea to ensure the safety and security of seafarers and rescued persons during such operations.⁶¹

40. UNHCR recently launched a cross-regional Special Mediterranean Initiative to scale up operational responses to the situation in the Mediterranean.⁶² The European Union Parliament proposed in May 2015 an Agenda on Migration based on “reducing the incentives for irregular migration”, “a strong asylum policy”, “saving lives and securing the external borders” and “a new policy on legal migration”.⁶³

41. With respect to the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand jointly declared on 20 May 2015 that their countries would provide humanitarian assistance to the 7000 migrants at sea.⁶⁴ UNHCR, supported by International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has developed an inter-agency action plan.⁶⁵

42. In another development, the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action,⁶⁶ adopted in 2014 following the Cartagena+30 process, contemplates the establishment of a Regional Consultative Mechanism in the Caribbean, and lays strong foundations for strengthened cooperation on protection at sea in that region.

VI. Maritime security

43. The General Assembly continued to, inter alia, express concern over different threats to maritime security and called upon States to take measures to combat such threats, including piracy and armed robbery against ships, trafficking and terrorist acts against shipping, offshore platforms and other maritime interests, in accordance with international law.

44. *Piracy and armed robbery at sea.* The overall number of attacks and attempts worldwide slightly declined in 2014 with 291 incidents reported to the IMO, representing a decrease of 2.3 per cent over the previous year.⁶⁷ During the first half of 2015, 22 attacks or attempts of piracy and 130 attacks or attempts of armed robbery at sea were reported.⁶⁸ In contrast to other regions where the number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships decreased, there was an 18 per cent increase in the number of incidents in Asia during the first half of 2015 compared to the same period in 2014.⁶⁹

⁶⁰ IMO contribution.

⁶¹ MSC 95/22, para. 21.6, referring to MSC 95/21/1 (ICS).

⁶² UNHCR contribution.

⁶³ European Commission, *A European Agenda on Migration*, COM(2015) 240 final, 13 May 2015, at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf.

⁶⁴ See <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2084026-migrants-jointstatement.html#document/p2>.

⁶⁵ UNHCR contribution.

⁶⁶ See www.refworld.org/docid/5487065b4.html.

⁶⁷ IMO, *Annual Report 2014 on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships*, document MSC.4/Circ.219/Rev.1, 28 April 2015, para. 5.

⁶⁸ IMO Reports on Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships, January-May 2015; gisis.imo.org.

⁶⁹ ReCAAP, *Half Yearly Report on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*, 1 January – 30 June 2015, page 2, at www.recaap.org/Portals/0/docs/Reports/2015/ReCAAP%20ISC%20Half%20Yearly%202015%20Report.pdf.

45. From 2013 to 2014, acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships in other parts of the world decreased from 20 to 12 incidents in the Western Indian Ocean region,⁷⁰ with no attacks or attempts reported during the first half of 2015;⁷¹ decreased from 54 to 45 incidents in the Gulf of Guinea,⁷² from 15 to 9 incidents in South America and the Caribbean,⁷³ and from eight to zero incidents in the Mediterranean Sea.⁷⁴ A single incident was reported in the North Atlantic Ocean in 2014.⁷⁵

46. The continued and long-term plight of remaining hostages remains a cause for serious concern. Although no captured vessels are held by Somali-based pirates, 26 hostages remain held by suspected pirates, down from 37 in August 2014.⁷⁶ The Gulf of Guinea also remains an area of concern due to the increase in the number of attacks resulting in the kidnapping of crew members from 8 in 2013 to 14 in 2014.⁷⁷

47. Coordinated international naval efforts, dedicated action by the shipping industry, as well as support by the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) have made strides in addressing piracy off the coast of Somalia.⁷⁸ For instance, the capacity-building programmes of IMO and UNODC have contributed to efforts to strengthen maritime law enforcement and increase judicial capacity in the Federal Republic of Somalia and other States in the region.⁷⁹ The Hostage Support Programme has continued to assist hostages still held in captivity and advocate for their safe release.⁸⁰ DOALOS's capacity-building activities are presented in para. 130.

48. In recognition of progress in the region, in June 2015, the IMO approved a Circular to exclude the Gulf of Suez and the Red Sea from the High Risk Area definition.⁸¹ It also approved Revised Interim recommendations for flag States regarding the use of privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships in the High Risk Area to recommend that private maritime security companies obtain ISO 28007-1:2015 certification or meet applicable national requirements.⁸²

49. In the Gulf of Guinea, implementation of a legal reform programme aimed at, inter alia, assisting States with assessing and improving national legal frameworks covering piracy and armed robbery against ships has commenced.⁸³ In that regard, it can be noted that a database of information on national legislation on piracy compiled with the input

⁷⁰ MSC.4/Circ.219/Rev.1, para. 6.

⁷¹ IMO contribution. See also Communiqué of the 18th Plenary of the CGPCS.

⁷² MSC.4/Circ.219/Rev.1, para. 8.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, para. 9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *CGPCS Newsletter*, August 2014, page 1, at

http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/cgpsc/docs/20140903_cgpcs_newsletter_september.pdf; *CGPCS Newsletter*, May 2015, page 1, at http://www.lessonsfrompiracy.net/files/2015/05/20150511_CGPCS-Newsletter-May-Vers2-2.pdf.

⁷⁷ Maritime Executive, "2014: Gulf of Guinea Piracy Declines 18%", 27 January 2015, at <http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/2014-gulf-of-guinea-piracy-declines-18>. See also IMO Assembly resolution A.1069(28).

⁷⁸ S/2014/740, paras. 5 and 6. See also Communiqué of the 18th Plenary session of the CGPCS, para. 2.

⁷⁹ IMO and UNODC contributions. See UNDOC, *Maritime Crime Programme - Annual Report 2014*, page 14, at https://www.unodc.org/documents/easternafrika/MCP_Brochure_December_2014_wv_6_1.pdf.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ IMO contribution. See also MSC 95/2, paras. 15.16 to 15.21, and 15.36.

⁸² MSC 95/2, paras. 15.26 to 15.36.

⁸³ UNODC contribution.

from IMO and UNODC is being maintained by DOALOS.⁸⁴ Since 2013, UNODC has also been collecting legislation and case law on piracy is available on its knowledge management portal.⁸⁵

50. The European Union Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020 aims to support the efforts of several regional organizations and signatory States to the 2013 Yaoundé “Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa”; to coordinate their responses to combat maritime crime.⁸⁶

51. In Asia, the Association of South-East Asian States adopted a Regional Work Plan for Maritime Security 2015-2017, in cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and other organizations.⁸⁷

52. *Illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.* UNODC has been considering the possibility of applying the piracy prosecution model to address illicit drug trafficking.⁸⁸ In 2014, there was a sharp rise in illicit traffic of narcotic drugs, particularly heroin, in the Indian Ocean, due to a shift of global trafficking routes from central Asia to the eastern African coast.⁸⁹ The recently established Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime aims at facilitating the sharing of information, the creation of prosecution networks and cooperation among the countries against a range of criminal activities at sea.⁹⁰

53. *Illicit traffic in fire arms.* Firearms are reportedly smuggled via the same routes as drugs, often by the same persons who transport illegal goods and migrants.⁹¹ At the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s Conference entitled “Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Fight against Terrorism in the Mediterranean Region” in 2014, participants discussed challenges associated with arms trafficking; illicit trading routes in the OSCE region and other affected areas to identify possible measures and tools to fight this threat.⁹²

54. *Smuggling and trafficking of persons.* Also of great concern is the increase in smuggling of migrants in the Mediterranean, as well as in South-East Asia (see also paras. 33-36). Activities to address the issue include: the convening of the first Regional Training Workshop to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants by sea for Mexico and the Central American and Caribbean region, in March 2015,⁹³ the ongoing

⁸⁴ See http://www.un.org/depts/los/piracy/piracy_national_legislation.htm.

⁸⁵ UNODC contribution.

⁸⁶ Council of the European Union, Document 7168/15, 16 March 2015, at <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7168-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.

⁸⁷ ReCAAP, *Quarterly Report on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*, 1 January – 31 March 2015, page 26, at www.recaap.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?Command=Core_Download&EntryId=390&PortalId=0&TabId=78.

⁸⁸ UNODC, *Maritime Crime Programme - Annual Report 2014*, page 13.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ UNODC contribution.

⁹¹ UNODC, *2015 Study of Firearms*, page 55, at www.unodc.org/documents/firearms-protocol/UNODC_Study_on_Firearms_WEB.pdf.

⁹² See www.osce.org/networks/135276?download=true.

⁹³ See www.unodc.org/ropan/en/HumanTrafficking/reports-of-the-regional-workshop-to-address-smuggling-of-migrants-som-by-sea-in-mexico--central-america-and-the-caribbean.html.

development and mentoring of multi-agency Port Intelligence Units in Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand,⁹⁴ the recent launch by the European Union of an operation to suppress activities of migrant smugglers or traffickers,⁹⁵ and the joint development by IMO, IOM and UNODC of a joint database on migrant incidents and on suspected smugglers and vessels.

55. *Maritime Cyber Security*. IMO is considering the development of voluntary guidelines on cyber security practices to protect elements of the maritime transportation system to combat a possible emerging threat to navigation.⁹⁶

VII. Sustainable development of oceans and seas

56. The essential role of oceans and seas in sustainable development has been emphasized in the General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea,⁹⁷ and also in “The Future we want”.⁹⁸ The sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process provided an opportunity to consider progress in the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.⁹⁹

57. States are increasingly looking to the oceans to further develop their economy. In order to discuss how to achieve this in a sustainable manner, a number of events took place during the reporting period, including the Blue Week in Portugal (June 2015),¹⁰⁰ which culminated in the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration,¹⁰¹ and the meetings convened by the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (see para. 140).

58. At the United Nations Summit in September 2015, States will be adopting Goal 14 (see para. 1), which includes seven targets and highlights three elements of implementation, including the commitment to “Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the Convention, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of ‘The future we want’”.¹⁰² Oceans can also contribute to the other goals in the draft 2030 sustainable development agenda.

59. In accordance with the post-2015 development agenda outcome, all goals and targets will be followed-up and reviewed on the basis of global, regional and national indicators. The follow-up and review processes, inter alia, will build on existing platforms, avoid duplication and benefit from the active support of the United Nations system, and other multilateral institutions. The High Level Political Forum will have a central role in overseeing the follow-up and review processes at the global level, working

⁹⁴ UNODC contribution.

⁹⁵ See Council of the European Union decision (CFSP) 2015/972 of 22 June 2015 at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015D0972&qid=1435825940768&from=EN>.

⁹⁶ IMO contribution; MSC 95/2, paras. 4.4 to 4.11 and MSC 94/21, paras. 4.3-4.7; CCICADA, “Terrorists and Criminals Can Remotely Hijack Ships and Insert Malware to Make ‘Zombie Attacks’ on Ports”, 29 January 2015, at: www.ccicada.org/2015/01/29/ccicada-addresses-the-growing-threat-of-maritime-cyber-attacks.

⁹⁷ Most recently in A/RES/69/245.

⁹⁸ A/RES/66/288.

⁹⁹ A/70/74.

¹⁰⁰ See <http://www.blueweek.pt/en>.

¹⁰¹ See <http://embaixadaportugalargel.com/2015/pdf/declaration-5-june.pdf>.

¹⁰² See note 1.

coherently with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant organs and forums, in accordance with existing mandates.¹⁰³ Some proposals to assist in the review of Goal 14 have been put forward, such as the proposal for “Triennial Oceans and Seas Global Conferences”.¹⁰⁴ Further consideration could also be given to the possible role of the Informal Consultative Process in the review of Goal 14 and other ocean-related goals. The General Assembly established the Consultative Process to facilitate the annual review by the Assembly, in an effective and constructive manner, of developments in ocean affairs by considering the Secretary-General’s report on oceans and the law of the sea and by suggesting particular issues to be considered by it, with an emphasis on identifying areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels should be enhanced.¹⁰⁵ The Assembly has recognized the role of the Consultative Process as a unique forum for comprehensive discussions on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea, consistent with the framework provided by the Convention and chapter 17 of Agenda 21.¹⁰⁶

A. Developing marine science and scientific information in support of decision-making

60. The General Assembly has consistently called for efforts to continue improving understanding and knowledge of the oceans and the deep sea by increasing marine scientific research activities in accordance with the Convention.¹⁰⁷ The draft 2030 agenda for sustainable development also highlights the importance of increasing scientific knowledge, developing research capacity and transferring of marine technology, taking into account the IOC-UNESCO Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.¹⁰⁸

61. The Capacity Development Strategy adopted by the Assembly of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) recommends, inter alia, enhancing access to scientific tools and methodologies, the communication between scientific and policy-makers communities and expanding ocean literacy.¹⁰⁹ In this regard, the OceanTeacher Global Academy project was launched to develop a network of regional training centres in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, and the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific regions. The Global Ocean Science Report, launched in 2014, will provide a tool for mapping and evaluating the human and institutional capacity of States in terms of marine research, observations and data/information management, as well as provide a global overview of the main fields of interest, technological developments, capacity-building needs and overall trends, as well as information on research investments and status of ocean research.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Ibid., para. 82.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, A/70/78, para. 41.

¹⁰⁵ A/RES/54/33.

¹⁰⁶ A/RES/69/245, para. 290.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., para. 239.

¹⁰⁸ See note 1.

¹⁰⁹ Resolution XXVIII-2. The strategy is available as documents IOC-XXVIII/2 Annex 8 and Add, and IOC-XXVIII/2 Annex 8 Corr Rev.

¹¹⁰ IOC contribution.

62. The 2nd International Ocean Research Conference on the theme “One Planet, One Ocean” in 2014, provided an opportunity to review progress in ocean sciences in the past 20 years and discuss the coming decade of international collaboration in marine science and technology.¹¹¹ Preparations are on-going towards the Second International Indian Ocean Expedition aimed at promoting awareness and understanding of Indian Ocean processes and their impacts on regional ecosystems, human populations and global climate.¹¹²

63. The International Group for Marine Ecological Time Series compiled data from more than 400 biochemical time series sites worldwide; the analysis of which will assist in distinguishing between natural and human-induced changes in marine ecosystems and in understanding ecosystems responses to climate change.¹¹³

64. The General Assembly has also stressed the importance of increasing scientific understanding of the oceans-atmosphere interface.¹¹⁴ In that regard, it can be noted that the Global Ocean Observing System continued to expand through the establishment of the Tropical Pacific Observing System and the Deep Ocean Observing Strategy. National meteorological and hydrological services, as well as regional bodies,¹¹⁵ continued to study and provide forecasting for the El Niño Southern Oscillation and other factors which drive global climate patterns.¹¹⁶ The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) currently indicates a moderate El Niño event which began late 2014, with a majority of models forecasting a strengthening of the event.

65. One of the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030 is: “Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030”.¹¹⁷ WMO is working with interested stakeholders, partners and organizations to develop and facilitate an International Network for Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems.¹¹⁸ The Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur (CPPS) agreed on a Regional Communication Protocol and built a virtual Platform for the National Tsunami Warning Centers of the South-East Pacific.¹¹⁹

66. As regards the exchange and access to ocean data, the importance of which has also been highlighted by the General Assembly,¹²⁰ recent developments include the linkage made by the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE), the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) and the International Coastal Area Network with on-going projects that have a data and information management component or require data and information management expertise.¹²¹ The OBIS, a part of IODE, has now reached 42 million marine species records.¹²²

¹¹¹ See <http://backendunesco.fnob.org>.

¹¹² IOC contribution. See also <http://www.iocunesco-oneplanetoneocean.fnob.org>.

¹¹³ IOC contribution.

¹¹⁴ A/RES/69/245, para. 249.

¹¹⁵ CPPS contribution.

¹¹⁶ See www.wmo.int/pages/prog/wcp/wcasp/enso_update_latest.html.

¹¹⁷ A/RES/69/283, Annex II, para. 18(g).

¹¹⁸ WMO contribution.

¹¹⁹ CPPS contribution.

¹²⁰ For example, A/RES/69/245, paras. 29, 31, 51 and 68.

¹²¹ IOC-XXVIII/3 prov. Pt.3 para. 14.

¹²² IOC contribution.

67. Efforts to gather environmental baseline data, in particular data on the fauna associated with exploration areas in the Area have also continued.¹²³ The Authority worked to standardize taxonomy for megafauna, macrofauna and meiofauna of the Area. Upon conclusion of this work, contractors, prospectors and marine scientific research organisations will be able to provide the Authority with comparable information and data for either their exploration areas or other areas within the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, and for an environmental management plan for the Zone.¹²⁴

68. Additional regional workshops to facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) were convened under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for the North-East Indian Ocean and the North-West Indian Ocean, and more are planned for other regions.¹²⁵ Work also continued on the identification of vulnerable marine ecosystems (see para. 80).

B. Assessments in support of decision-making

69. Monitoring and assessments provide an essential, sound scientific basis for the sustainable management of oceans and their resources. They are also an essential element of adaptive management.

70. *The Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.* The first global integrated marine assessment, which is the outcome of the first cycle of the Regular Process, has been completed by the Group of Experts. The Assessment is expected to provide a baseline for the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, and contribute to building a better science-policy interface for sound decision-making, as well as identify capacity-building gaps. The information in the Assessment can contribute, inter alia, to the General Assembly's review of ocean issues, including the consideration of the topic of focus by the Informal Consultative Process.

71. The sixth meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process will be convened in September 2015 to consider the Assessment and its summary¹²⁶ with a view to making recommendations to the General Assembly on how States, intergovernmental organizations and relevant entities may use the Assessment as a scientific basis in their future decision-making and programmes of work, and on the lessons learned and the way forward in preparation for the second cycle of the Regular Process, also bearing in mind the need to ensure predictability and sustainability of financial resources¹²⁷ to support its operations.¹²⁸

72. *Other assessments.* At the global level, other relevant assessments include those carried out under the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)¹²⁹ and the Transboundary Water Assessment Programme.¹³⁰

¹²³ ISBA/21/A/2.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ CBD secretariat contribution.

¹²⁶ A/70/112.

¹²⁷ See A/70/112, paras. 19-22.

¹²⁸ A/RES/69/245, para. 277.

¹²⁹ See <http://www.ipbes.net>.

¹³⁰ IOC-UNESCO contribution. The TWAP assessment products will be made available through a future "One-Shared-Ocean" web portal.

In a context of scarcity of resources, the challenge will be to avoid overlaps and duplication. The General Assembly has recognized the importance of ensuring that the assessments prepared under the IPBES and the Regular Process support each other and avoid unnecessary duplication.¹³¹ Consequently, the IPBES plenary agreed to consider, at its fourth session, to delay its proposed regional assessment on the open oceans pending the outcome of the Regular Process' first Assessment.¹³²

73. At the regional level, a number of initiatives have continued to support and feed into global assessments, in particular the Regular Process. For example, a regional state of the coast report for the Western Indian Ocean region was launched at the Conference of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of Marine and Coastal and Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region (Nairobi Convention) in June 2015.¹³³ The Wider Caribbean Region is developing the first report on the state of the Convention area.¹³⁴

C. Conservation and management of living marine resources

74. The potential contribution of sustainable fisheries to sustainable development is well-recognized.¹³⁵ The General Assembly, in particular through its resolutions on sustainable fisheries,¹³⁶ has highlighted actions which States should take, individually or through international organizations, to improve the conservation and management of living marine resources, including through the effective implementation of UNCLOS, the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and related international instruments. Goal 14 (see para. 58) also calls for a number of actions to be taken by 2020 in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.¹³⁷ During the period under consideration, a number of actions have been taken by intergovernmental organizations in furtherance of the General Assembly resolutions.

Developments at the global level

75. 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, which elaborates on the provisions of the Convention regarding the conservation and sustainable use of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/109, the Secretary-General convened a round-table discussion, on 17 March, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Agreement.¹³⁸

76. The General Assembly decided that the Review Conference on the 1995 Agreement will be resumed for one week in the first half of 2016.¹³⁹ To assist it in

¹³¹ A/RES/69/245, para. 270.

¹³² IPBES/3/18.

¹³³ See

www.unep.org/NairobiConvention/Publications/Regional_State_of_Coast_Report_for_the_Western_Indian_Ocean.asp.

¹³⁴ UNEP contribution.

¹³⁵ OECD (2015), *Green Growth in Fisheries and Aquaculture*, OECD Green Growth Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264232143-en>. On blue growth, see FAO contribution.

¹³⁶ See, e.g., A/RES/69/109.

¹³⁷ See note 1.

¹³⁸ See http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/fishstockmeetings/UNFSA_table.pdf.

¹³⁹ A/RES/69/109, para. 40.

discharging its mandate under article 36 of the Agreement, the resumed Review Conference will have before it an updated report of the Secretary-General, prepared in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).¹⁴⁰ The eleventh round of informal consultations of States Parties to the 1995 Agreement, in March 2015, served primarily as a preparatory meeting for the resumed Review Conference. It, *inter alia*, agreed on the draft provisional agenda and the draft organization of work for the resumed Review Conference.¹⁴¹

77. Other actions taken at the global level to support the implementation of international instruments highlighted in General Assembly resolutions, include the support provided by FAO to States in the development of national legislation to implement international agreements, including UNCLOS.¹⁴² FAO also organized an expert workshop to discuss elements of the Global Assistance Programme for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, and will also organize a series of regional workshops for the development of regional action plans.¹⁴³

78. With respect to the 2009 Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, FAO is conducting a series of regional capacity-development workshops and country-specific trainings, and has supported States in strengthening relevant national fisheries legislation. FAO also developed a guide for the implementation of the 2009 Agreement and training manuals for port inspection.¹⁴⁴

79. Through its programmes on the 2009 Agreement, FAO is also promoting the Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, in February 2015, the Global Record Informal Open-Ended Technical and Advisory Working Group addressed key issues related to the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels, such as the scope, system development, governance framework and financial mechanism.¹⁴⁶

80. *Bottom fisheries.* Regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements (RFMO/As) continue to implement conservation and management measures to identify and protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from adverse impacts of bottom fishing.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Database on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, developed by FAO in collaboration with the regional bodies with mandates to manage deep-sea fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction, was launched.¹⁴⁸

81. The General Assembly decided to conduct a further review of the actions taken by States and RFMO/As in response to paragraphs 113, 117 and 119 to 124 of resolution 64/72 and paragraphs 121, 126, 129, 130 and 132 to 134 of resolution 66/68, with a view to ensuring effective implementation of the measures therein and to make further

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 41.

¹⁴¹ http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/fishstocksmeetings/icsp11_final_fsa.pdf.

¹⁴² FAO contribution.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ See, e.g., CCAMLR contribution.

¹⁴⁸ FAO contribution.

recommendations, where necessary. This review will be preceded by a two-day workshop to be convened by the Secretary-General in the second half of 2016 to discuss the implementation of those paragraphs.¹⁴⁹ The workshop and subsequent review will be informed by a report of the Secretary-General, prepared in cooperation with FAO.¹⁵⁰

Developments at the regional level

82. A wide range of conservation and management measures have been adopted by RFMO/As, including: electronic catch document schemes,¹⁵¹ inclusion of the IMO and Lloyd's Register numbering system in publically available databases of fishing vessels,¹⁵² as well as measures for specific target species and non-target species, such as sharks.¹⁵³ States also continue to be engaged in the development of new RFMO/As,¹⁵⁴ modernization of RFMO constitutive instruments¹⁵⁵ and performance reviews.¹⁵⁶ RFMO/As continue to cooperate with each other, for example, in relation to the listing of vessels engaged in IUU fishing.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the first meeting of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission) held in April 2015 under the collective arrangement between competent international organizations on cooperation and coordination regarding selected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the North-East Atlantic in 2014¹⁵⁸ created a better understanding of the priorities for each organization and their respective ways of working/decision-making¹⁵⁹ (see also para. 91). In the Gulf of Mexico, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Strategic Action Programme for the Gulf of Mexico large marine ecosystem foresees the implementation of joint stock assessments and the development of management plans by Mexico and the United States of America.

83. In Sudan, UNIDO's "Surveys of renewable marine resources in the Red Sea State" and project on "Building institutional capacities for the sustainable management of the marine fisheries in the Red Sea State" has supported the conservation and utilization of living marine resources.¹⁶⁰ Capacity-building activities for fisheries management carried out by RFMO/As include the following. The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) has, inter alia, funded participation in meetings, as well as training activities and regional workshops.¹⁶¹ It also adopted recommendations on the establishment of a Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Fund, aimed principally at assisting developing countries implement port State measures and other relevant

¹⁴⁹ A/RES/69/109, paras. 162-163.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., para. 164.

¹⁵¹ ICCAT contribution.

¹⁵² WCPFC contribution.

¹⁵³ WCPFC contribution.

¹⁵⁴ For developments relating to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Region, see ESCWA and FAO contributions.

¹⁵⁵ See, e.g., ICCAT contribution.

¹⁵⁶ On the establishment of an ad hoc Working Group on Performance Review to draw up the terms of reference of the next review (Rec. 14-12), see ICCAT contribution.

¹⁵⁷ See, e.g., ICCAT's Guidelines for the procedures to be followed for the inclusion of vessels on the IUU lists of other tuna RFMOs on the IUU list, to promote transparency and standard treatment. (Res. 14-11). ICCAT contribution.

¹⁵⁸ For the text of the arrangement, see Summary record of the meeting of the OSPAR Commission, Cascais, June 2014, Annex 33.

¹⁵⁹ OSPAR contribution.

¹⁶⁰ UNIDO contribution.

¹⁶¹ ICCAT contribution.

activities.¹⁶² The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission passed a measure that directs members, cooperating non-members and participating territories to contribute to the capacity of developing countries in fisheries and related disciplines.¹⁶³ The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) established a General Science Capacity Fund and a scholarship which is available to early career scientists from CCAMLR members.¹⁶⁴

D. Conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity

84. Marine biodiversity underpins a variety of ecosystem goods and services, from nutrient cycling to food security, carbon sequestration and recreation. The General Assembly has consistently reaffirmed the need for States, individually or through competent international organizations, to urgently consider ways to integrate and improve the management of risks to the marine biodiversity of seamounts, cold water corals, hydrothermal vents and certain other underwater features.¹⁶⁵

85. A number of initiatives are on-going to promote understanding of the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity, such as the impacts of fishing activities, pressures on the marine environment, as well as climate change and ocean acidification,¹⁶⁶ and identify means to prevent or mitigate these impacts (see sections C, E and F of this chapter and chapter VIII). With regard to the General Assembly's call to further consider options to identify and protect ecologically or biologically significant areas,¹⁶⁷ work has continued in the context of the CBD (see para. 68), FAO and RFMOs (see para. 80), and IMO (see paras. 25 and 114) to describe and/or identify such areas.¹⁶⁸

86. Measures also continue to be adopted for specific ecosystems and species, in particular marine migratory species, including cetaceans.¹⁶⁹ With regard to coral reefs, the Parties to the CBD adopted priority actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems.¹⁷⁰ Accordingly, a global coral reef portal is being developed to facilitate collaboration and information-sharing on sustainable management of coral reefs and related ecosystems (see also para. 120).¹⁷¹ Work has also continued under the UNEP Global Coral Reef Partnership, in particular on mitigation of impacts from tourism, development of indicators and assessments, and use of economic instruments.¹⁷² An integrated approach to community-based coral reef conservation and

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ WCPFC contribution.

¹⁶⁴ CCAMLR contribution.

¹⁶⁵ A/RES/69/245, preamble, ops. 221 and 222.

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, forthcoming Conference "Our Ocean, Chile 2015", 5-6 October (<http://www.nuestrooceano2015.gob.cl/>).

¹⁶⁷ A/RES/69/245, para. 225.

¹⁶⁸ CBD Secretariat, FAO, CCAMLR, NEAFC, WCPFC and IMO contributions.

¹⁶⁹ See, for example, resolutions of the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals at <http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/eleventh-meeting-conference-parties-cms>; outcome of the Fifth Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels at <http://www.acap.aq/en/meeting-of-the-parties/mop5>; outcome of the sixty-fifth meeting of the International Whaling Commission at <https://iwc.int/iwc65docs>. See also CCAMLR and UNEP contributions.

¹⁷⁰ Decision XII/23.

¹⁷¹ CBD secretariat contribution.

¹⁷² UNEP contribution.

management emphasizing land-sea connectivity is being promoted through the International Coral Reef Initiative.¹⁷³

87. A number of capacity-building activities have taken place, including in the context of the CBD Sustainable Ocean Initiative, with a focus on integrated marine and coastal management and marine spatial planning towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.¹⁷⁴

88. *Marine genetic resources.* The General Assembly has consistently recognized the importance of research on marine genetic resources for the purpose of enhancing the scientific understanding, potential use and application, and enhanced management of marine ecosystems.¹⁷⁵ In May 2015, the results of analyses of a portion of the 35000 samples of planktonic organisms, including viruses, microbes and microscopic eukaryotes, collected during the 2009-2013 TARA Oceans expedition, were released.¹⁷⁶ The analyses revealed around 40 million genes, the majority of which are new to science.

89. With regard to access and benefit-sharing, the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, adopted decisions on, inter alia, compliance and the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House and information sharing.¹⁷⁷ The need for and modalities of a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism will be discussed at an expert meeting scheduled for February 2016.

90. *Marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.* Following the completion of the work of the BBNJ Working Group in January 2015,¹⁷⁸ the General Assembly, in resolution 69/292 of 19 June 2015, decided to develop an international legally-binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

91. A variety of other actors have also placed increased interest recently in marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. For example, in the Pacific, the inaugural meeting of the Pacific Ocean Alliance, held in May 2015, focused on informing on issues of relevance to the General Assembly process.¹⁷⁹ UNEP has launched the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance, in the context of which it has assisted the Parties to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention) in convening a working group, established by the Conference of the Parties to that Convention, to study issues related to marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.¹⁸⁰ In June 2015, the Conference of the Parties to the Nairobi Convention urged Contracting Parties to cooperate in improving the governance of areas beyond national jurisdiction, building on existing regional institutions including the Nairobi Convention.¹⁸¹ In the North-East Atlantic,

¹⁷³ Minutes of the 29th ICRI General Meeting at: <http://www.icriforum.org/icri-documents/icri-meetings-minutes/icri-gm-29-minutes-general-meeting>.

¹⁷⁴ CBD secretariat contribution.

¹⁷⁵ A/RES/69/245, para. 218.

¹⁷⁶ See <http://oceans.taraexpeditions.org/en/m/science/results>.

¹⁷⁷ UNEP/CBD/NP/COP-MOP/1/10.

¹⁷⁸ A/69/780 and A/RES/69/292.

¹⁷⁹ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) contribution. See A/RES/69/292.

¹⁸⁰ UNEP contribution.

¹⁸¹ See www.unep.org/NairobiConvention/Meetings/COP8/index.asp.

NEAFC and OSPAR discussed at their first meeting (see para. 82), inter alia, information on science and proposed uses, cooperation on environmental impact assessments, consulting on respective objectives, and exchange of data.¹⁸²

E. Pressures on the marine environment

92. The General Assembly annually emphasizes the importance of the implementation of Part XII of UNCLOS in order to protect and preserve the marine environment and its living marine resources against pollution and physical degradation.¹⁸³ It also encourages States and international organizations to take a number of specific measures. Recent action to address pressures from land- and sea-based activities is presented below. In addition, it can be noted that the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention is developing the first regional environmental standards in Africa regulating the exploration and exploitation of offshore oil and gas, with the assistance of OSPAR.¹⁸⁴

93. *Land-based activities, including marine debris.* In its resolution 69/245, the General Assembly recognized that most of the pollution load of the oceans emanates from land-based activities, and called upon States, as a matter of priority, to implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and to take all appropriate measures to fulfil the commitments in the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the GPA (Manila Declaration).¹⁸⁵

94. In accordance with the Manila Declaration,¹⁸⁶ efforts in implementing the GPA have focused on marine litter, wastewater and nutrient management. Efforts to address other land-based sources of pollution include, an IAEA programme entitled “Modelling and Data for Radiological Impact Assessments” covering, inter alia, the transfer of radionuclides accidentally released from land-based facilities.¹⁸⁷ UNIDO undertook capacity-building measures to assist States in the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.¹⁸⁸

95. With regard to nutrient management, the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), continued to develop programmes to address nutrient pollution to the marine environment. In 2015, it is focussing its efforts on knowledge generation, technical services, outreach and advocacy, and partnership and network development.¹⁸⁹

96. As to wastewater, recent measures aimed at helping improve wastewater management and reducing the pollution loads in the coastal cities, include the development of “Regional Guidelines on Wastewater Management in Coastal Cities on the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden” by the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the

¹⁸² See ISBA/21/C/9. Also, OSPAR contribution.

¹⁸³ A/RES/69/245, para. 162.

¹⁸⁴ OSPAR contribution.

¹⁸⁵ A/RES/69/245, para. 190.

¹⁸⁶ UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/10.

¹⁸⁷ IAEA contribution.

¹⁸⁸ UNIDO contribution.

¹⁸⁹ See

unep.org/gpa/documents/meetings/gpnm/steeringcommittee/ReportofGPNMSteeringCommitteeDecember2014.pdf.

Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.¹⁹⁰ Also UNEP's Global Wastewater Initiative supported, in collaboration with Italy, a two-year wastewater reuse pilot project in the region of Gerga, Egypt.¹⁹¹

97. As regards marine debris, the General Assembly has noted with concern its negative effects, especially that of plastics, and the need to better understand and reduce such pollution.¹⁹² In this connection, the General Assembly decided that the seventeenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process in 2016 will focus its discussions on the theme "marine debris, plastics and microplastics".¹⁹³ The Process had previously discussed marine debris in 2005 and its recommendations are reflected in the General Assembly resolutions. Marine plastic debris and microplastics are also expected to be considered at the second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2016, inter alia, based on a UNEP study.¹⁹⁴

98. Marine debris was also the focus of attention in other organizations. For example, the CBD secretariat is developing, with the assistance of experts, practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats.¹⁹⁵ The Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species adopted a resolution on Management of Marine Debris, inter alia, encouraging States Parties to address knowledge gaps in management of marine debris and develop campaigns of specific relevance to migratory species.¹⁹⁶ IWC continued to study the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans and ways to address them, including with a view to preventing their incidental capture.¹⁹⁷

99. Action at the regional level, includes the adoption and implementation of regional action plans, such as the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter for the Baltic Sea,¹⁹⁸ the Regional Plan on Marine Litter in the framework of UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan for the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution, the Wider Caribbean Region revised Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management,¹⁹⁹ the CPPS Regional Programme for the Integrated Management of Marine Litter in the Southeast Pacific,²⁰⁰ the OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter,²⁰¹ and the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP).²⁰² The CCAMLR Scientific Committee annually reviews available data and reports on trends in marine debris.²⁰³

¹⁹⁰ UNEP contribution.

¹⁹¹ <http://unep.org/gpa/news/Egyptreuseswastewater.asp>.

¹⁹² A/Res/69/245, paras. 181-184.

¹⁹³ Ibid., para. 298.

¹⁹⁴ UNEA resolution 1/6, available at: http://www.unep.org/unea/UNEA_Resolutions.asp.

¹⁹⁵ CBD contribution.

¹⁹⁶ CMS COP resolution 11.30 of 1 December 2014.

¹⁹⁷ IWC contribution.

¹⁹⁸ HELCOM contribution.

¹⁹⁹ UNEP contribution.

²⁰⁰ CPPS contribution.

²⁰¹ OSPAR contribution.

²⁰² www.nowpap.org.

²⁰³ CCAMLR contribution.

100. In June 2015, the Group of Seven (G7) committed to priority actions and solutions to combat marine litter, stressing the need to address land- and sea-based sources, removal actions, as well as education, research and outreach.²⁰⁴

101. A number of reports and studies on different aspects of marine debris have been published, including with regard to abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear²⁰⁵ and a review and analysis of regional and national legal and policy frameworks for selected regions/countries where recovery and clean-up missions have been successful.²⁰⁶ Through its study, “Sources, fate and effects of microplastics in the marine environment: a global assessment”, the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) aims to provide an improved evidence base to support policy and management decisions on measures to reduce the input of microplastics into the oceans. The study, inter alia, highlights the need to continue to increase scientific knowledge and awareness of this issue.²⁰⁷ The Group is to present a report on the impact of microplastics on fish by May 2016.²⁰⁸

102. *Disposal of wastes.* In November 2014, the Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention) and its 1996 Protocol decided to undertake a scientific study relating to all radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter other than high level wastes or matter in order to review the prohibition on dumping of such substances as required under the London Convention and Protocol.²⁰⁹ In this regard, the IAEA prepared a report entitled “Determining the suitability of materials for disposal at sea under the London Convention 1972 and London Protocol 1996: A Radiological Assessment Procedure” and updated the guidelines to determine radionuclide levels in materials that may be dumped at sea and the database on the inventory of historical disposals, accidents and losses in the oceans involving radioactive materials.²¹⁰

103. Other developments include the adoption of Guidance for consideration of marine geoengineering activities, by the Parties to the 1996 Protocol.²¹¹ Furthermore, an international workshop to increase the scientific understanding of the impact of the disposal of mine tailings at sea on the marine environment was held in Lima, in June 2015, under the auspices GESAMP.

104. *Shipping activities.* As recognized by the General Assembly, international shipping rules and standards adopted by IMO have led to a significant reduction in maritime accidents and pollution incidents.²¹² Efforts to address pressures on the marine environment from shipping have thus focused on entry into force of relevant instruments and the adoption of further measures.

²⁰⁴ Group of Seven, Leaders’ Declaration G7 Summit, 7–8 June 2015, available at: www.g7germany.de.

²⁰⁵ FAO contribution.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ GESAMP, “Sources, fate and effects of microplastics in the marine environment: a global assessment” (2015) available at: <http://www.gesamp.org/publications/publicationdisplaypages/reports-and-studies-no.-90>.

²⁰⁸ IOC/UNESCO contribution.

²⁰⁹ IMO contribution.

²¹⁰ IAEA contribution.

²¹¹ IMO contribution.

²¹² A/RES/69/245, para. 157.

105. As encouraged by the General Assembly, IMO has worked to facilitate entry into force of the 2004 International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments. The number of Contracting Governments is currently 44, representing 32.86 per cent of the world's merchant fleet tonnage, which is slightly short of the required 35 per cent needed for its entry into force.

106. IMO and the International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds secretariat have worked to bring into force the 2010 International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, as encouraged by the General Assembly.²¹³ The IOPC Funds secretariat has also undertaken activities to encourage worldwide adoption and understanding of the international regime for oil pollution compensation.²¹⁴

107. With regard to air pollution from ships, IMO considered amendments and revisions to existing guidance and requirements under MARPOL. It also agreed to develop guidelines for sampling and verification of fuel oil used on board ships.²¹⁵

108. With regard to removal of wrecks, the General Assembly has requested States to take appropriate measures to address hazards that may be caused by wrecks and drifting or sunken cargo to navigation or the marine environment.²¹⁶ Thousands of corroding ships sunk during WWII, for example, are estimated to be in danger of leaking oil into the environment. The Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, which entered into force on 14 April 2015, does not apply to any warship or other ship owned or operated by a State and used, for the time being, only on Government non-commercial service, unless that State decides otherwise.

109. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has worked with IMO to develop a safe regime for environmentally sound recycling of ships, as encouraged by the General Assembly.²¹⁷ It also assisted IMO in developing recommendations on threshold levels of radioactive materials to be applied for safe recycling of ships.²¹⁸

110. *Ocean noise.* The General Assembly has noted the potential significant adverse impacts on living marine resources from ocean noise and affirmed the importance of sound scientific studies in addressing the issue, while, encouraging further research, studies and consideration.²¹⁹ In response, a number of organizations, at the global and regional levels, have continued to work towards improving knowledge on underwater noise and its impacts and sharing this information, including through workshops and publications.²²⁰ Action plans, practical guidance and toolkits to minimize and mitigate the significant adverse impacts of anthropogenic underwater noise are under development.²²¹ A new indicator and a registry on impulsive noise, as well as an inventory of noise

²¹³ IMO contribution and A/RES/69/245, para. 210.

²¹⁴ IOPC Funds contribution.

²¹⁵ IMO contribution.

²¹⁶ A/RES/69/245, paras 142, 143.

²¹⁷ A/RES/69/245, preamble and para. 205.

²¹⁸ IAEA contribution.

²¹⁹ A/RES/69/245, para. 237. See also http://www.un.org/depts/los/general_assembly/noise/noise.htm.

²²⁰ CBD, HELCOM, IWC contributions.

²²¹ Ibid.

mitigation measures have been developed at the regional level.²²² Ambient noise monitoring strategies have also been developed.²²³

F. Management tools

111. The General Assembly has reaffirmed the need to improve cooperation and coordination at all levels, in accordance with UNCLOS, to support integrated management of the oceans and seas²²⁴ (see para. 139). It has also consistently recognized the need for ecosystem approaches,²²⁵ and reaffirmed the need to develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools for conserving and managing marine biodiversity and ecosystems.²²⁶

112. *Environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments.* At the core of the development of effective management measures is the knowledge gained through assessments of the impacts of various activities, projects and programmes on the marine environment, including cumulative impacts and their interaction with the ecosystem. In that regard, OSPAR is currently testing a methodology for assessing cumulative impacts.²²⁷ The Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, in June 2015, reviewed Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment in Antarctica.²²⁸ Various sectors have also continued to assess the impacts of their activities and various threats to the marine environment, such as fisheries, oil spills and spills of hazardous substances.²²⁹

113. *Integrated approaches.* Cross-sectoral cooperation has increasingly taken place both at the global and regional levels (see, for example, paras. 82 and 92). In addition, a number of intergovernmental organizations have continued to facilitate the understanding and implementation of marine spatial planning as an integrated approach, including UNEP,²³⁰ IOC,²³¹ and the CBD Secretariat.²³² Initiatives at the global²³³ and regional levels²³⁴ have also continued to promote the application of ecosystem approaches.

114. *Area-based management tools.* It has been reported that 3.4 per cent of the world's oceans are currently under protection.²³⁵ The World Parks Congress developed recommendations to enhance marine conservation through marine protected areas (MPAs) and networks thereof.²³⁶ In May 2015, the IMO extended the eastern limit of the current Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait Particularly Sensitive Sea Area to encompass the south-west part of the Coral Sea and subsequently adopted associated protective measures in the form of new ship routeing measures.²³⁷ At the regional level, efforts continued in

²²² OSPAR contribution.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ A/RES/69/245, Preamble.

²²⁵ Ibid., Preamble and paras. 200, 201, 202, 230.

²²⁶ Ibid., para 226. Also see paras. 223 and 225.

²²⁷ OSPAR contribution.

²²⁸ See Host country communiqué on the outcomes of the XXXVIII Antarctic Treaty Meeting, at http://www.ats.aq/devPH/noticia_completa.aspx?IdNews=120&lang=e.

²²⁹ See e.g. FAO, IAEA, OSPAR, CCAMLR, WCPFC contributions.

²³⁰ UNEP contribution.

²³¹ IOC contribution.

²³² CBD Secretariat contribution.

²³³ See e.g. IWC contribution.

²³⁴ See e.g. FAO, UNEP, CCAMLR, CPPS, OSPAR contributions.

²³⁵ See UNEP-WCMC, Protected Planet Report 2014.

²³⁶ See http://worldparkscongress.org/about/promise_of_sydney_innovative_approaches.html.

²³⁷ IMO contribution.

relation to proposals on a representative system of MPAs in the Ross Sea Region and in East Antarctica, and to the establishment of MPAs in the Western Antarctic Peninsula.²³⁸ The Parties to the Antarctic Treaty discussed updates and improved arrangements for 17 Antarctic Protected Areas.²³⁹ MPAs currently cover about 12 per cent of the marine area of the Baltic Sea.²⁴⁰ Seventy-seven MPAs were added to the OSPAR network, the network now totalling 413 MPAs (six per cent of the total OSPAR area), ten of which are beyond areas of national jurisdiction.²⁴¹

VIII. Oceans and climate change and ocean acidification

115. The General Assembly has continued to emphasize the urgency of addressing the effects of climate change and ocean acidification on the marine environment and marine biodiversity and recommended a number of actions,²⁴² including raising awareness of the adverse impacts of climate change on the oceans (see, for example, para. 142).

116. During the reporting period, the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) prepared the Paris climate agreement for adoption at the Paris Conference later this year.²⁴³ IMO has also continued its work on further developing guidelines to assist in the implementation of the mandatory energy-efficiency regulations for international shipping.²⁴⁴

117. The UNFCCC Structured Expert Dialogue on the 2013–2015 Review of the adequacy of the long-term global goal of limiting global warming below 2° above pre-industrial levels addressed key aspects relating to the warming and acidification of oceans and the corresponding impacts on, for example, marine ecosystems, coastal zones, food security, livelihoods and sustainable development.²⁴⁵

118. A wide range of research activities is taking place to study the impacts of climate change on oceans. For example, IOC-UNESCO established a working group to improve measurements needed to detect the impact of increasing CO₂ levels on marine life.²⁴⁶ International meetings have also provided an opportunity to exchange information on the state of knowledge on climate change,²⁴⁷ and the latest developments in predicting changes in biodiversity, phenology, fisheries and ecosystems,²⁴⁸ as well as to develop research strategies to provide guidance on what environmental changes, including harmful algae blooms, can be expected.²⁴⁹

²³⁸ CCAMLR contribution.

²³⁹ See Host country communiqué on the outcomes of the XXXVIII Antarctic Treaty Meeting, at http://www.ats.aq/devPH/noticia_completa.aspx?IdNews=120&lang=e.

²⁴⁰ HELCOM contribution.

²⁴¹ OSPAR contribution.

²⁴² A/RES/69/245.

²⁴³ UNFCCC contribution.

²⁴⁴ IMO contribution.

²⁴⁵ FCCC/SB/2015/INF.1 and UNFCCC contribution.

²⁴⁶ IOC-UNESCO contribution.

²⁴⁷ See <http://www.commonfuture-paris2015.org>.

²⁴⁸ Third International Symposium on the Effects of Climate Change in the World's Ocean: www.pices.int/meetings/international_symposia/2015/2015-Climate-Change/scope.aspx

²⁴⁹ Symposium on Harmful Algal Blooms and Climate Change: www.pices.int/meetings/international_symposia/2015/2015-HAB/scope.aspx.

119. Scientific studies have also been conducted on the extent of ocean acidification.²⁵⁰ For example, work is on-going on coordinating and improving ocean observations to document the status and progress of ocean acidification.²⁵¹ An updated global ocean surface CO₂ map will be released in September 2015, which will provide crucial data enabling further research on ocean acidification.²⁵² OSPAR and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea have established an expert study group on ocean acidification, whose final report included a draft monitoring and assessment strategy.²⁵³

120. Other studies have focussed on the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification and how to adapt to them, including impacts on marine biodiversity,²⁵⁴ and on livelihoods and economies of coastal communities.²⁵⁵ The CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will be considering a work plan on biodiversity and acidification in cold-water corals areas at its twentieth meeting²⁵⁶ (see also para. 86). UNEP is preparing a report on mesophotic reefs and their role in supporting resilience of shallow reef habitat, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal.²⁵⁷ The FAO-Adapt Framework Programme on Climate Change Adaptation is aimed at improving the resilience and adaptability of fisheries and aquaculture sectors to climate change and ocean acidification.

121. The specific challenges faced by small island developing States (SIDS) are also being studied (see also paras. 122-124). UNEP is developing a decision-support framework, being piloted for SIDS, to enable planners to select, develop and implement appropriate policies and measures for coastal ecosystem-based adaptation.²⁵⁸ The WMO created a Programme for SIDS with the aim of consolidating its existing activities to support improved weather and climate services and increase the resilience of SIDS to extreme weather events and other adverse climate change impacts. At the UNCTAD Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation, in-depth consideration was given to some of the particular transport and trade logistics challenges that SIDS face, including those arising from the impacts of climate variability.²⁵⁹

IX. Supporting small island developing States and land-locked developing States

122. *Small island developing States.* Oceans and their resources are of vital importance to SIDS. As also highlighted in various forums, the General Assembly has consistently recognized the particular vulnerabilities and capacity-building needs of SIDS.²⁶⁰ In

²⁵⁰ WMO contribution.

²⁵¹ Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network at <http://goa-on.org>.

²⁵² Surface Ocean CO₂ Atlas (SOCAT version 3), see IOC-UNESCO contribution.

²⁵³ See report:

http://ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2014/SGOA/sgoa_finalOSPAR_2015.pdf.

²⁵⁴ CBD Secretariat, "An Updated Synthesis of the Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine Biodiversity", available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-75-en.pdf>; and

http://unfccc.int/science/workstreams/the_2013-2015_review/items/6998.php.

²⁵⁵ IAEA contribution.

²⁵⁶ CBD contribution.

²⁵⁷ UNEP contribution.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ UNCTAD contribution.

²⁶⁰ A/RES/69/245, Preamble and paras. . 9, 14, 16- 17, 23- 25, 32, 139, 203, 242, 296.

response, a number of activities have been undertaken or are under development to build the capacity of SIDS in a number of areas, including weather and climate services (see also para. 121),²⁶¹ maritime transport and trade logistics,²⁶² coastal ecosystem-based adaptation,²⁶³ sustainable financing of the conservation of critical fishery habitats.²⁶⁴

123. The topic of oceans and seas figured prominently at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in September 2014. The outcome document, the SAMOA Pathway, set forth modalities for strengthened action on a range of challenges and priorities for SIDS, including in relation to oceans, coastal and marine resources.²⁶⁵ A partnership between DOALOS and IOC-UNESCO was registered at the Conference and the corresponding development of regional training programmes is underway with a first delivery intended particularly for Pacific SIDS.²⁶⁶

124. The Framework for Pacific Regionalism, endorsed in July 2014, sets out a process to identify and implement regional priorities, based on the objectives of sustainable development.²⁶⁷ The Pacific Ocean Alliance held its first meeting in May 2015 (see para. 91).²⁶⁸ The Alliance, which is facilitated by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, is an information-sharing and coordination mechanism to provide effective ocean policy coordination and implementation, facilitate regional cooperation for the high seas, and explore emerging issues.²⁶⁹

125. *Land-locked developing States.* The General Assembly continued to highlight the need for cooperation to address the development needs and challenges faced by LLDCs.²⁷⁰ Long delays in inland transport, customs and port handling procedures are common in developing countries, especially affecting those that are landlocked.²⁷¹ The full participation of LLDCs in international trade continues to be negatively impacted by high trade transaction costs, as well as inadequate physical transport infrastructure.²⁷²

126. A number of meetings have adopted measures to address the special needs and status of LLDCs. The 2014 Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA), the outcome document of the second United Nations Conference on LLDCs, seeks to, inter alia, promote unfettered, efficient and cost-effective access to and from the sea by all means of transport, on the basis of the freedom of transit, and other related measures, in accordance with applicable international law, to reduce trade transaction costs, develop adequate transit transport infrastructure and effectively implement bilateral and international legal instruments and strengthen regional integration.²⁷³ A 2015 informal stock-taking meeting on the second UN Conference on LLDCs, deliberated on how the six priorities of the VPoA can be integrated into other processes, including, inter alia, the post-2015

²⁶¹ WMO contribution.

²⁶² UNCTAD contribution.

²⁶³ UNEP contribution.

²⁶⁴ PIFS contribution.

²⁶⁵ A/RES/69/15, Annex, paras. 53-58.

²⁶⁶ See <http://www.sids2014.org/partnerships>.

²⁶⁷ See www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/embeds/file/Framework%20for%20Pacific%20Regionalism_booklet.pdf.

²⁶⁸ PIFS contribution.

²⁶⁹ Charter of the Pacific Ocean Alliance.

²⁷⁰ For example, A/RES/69/245 para. 288.

²⁷¹ See <http://www.lldc2conference.org/>.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ See http://www.lldc2conference.org/conference_details/francais-5-nov-2014-world-leaders-adopt-ambitious-10-year-action-plan-for-lldc/.

development agenda, Financing for Development, and the Climate Change Agenda.²⁷⁴ A three day follow-up meeting to the second United Nations Conference on LLDCs adopted the Livingstone Call for Action for the Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA for LLDCs on 4 June 2015.²⁷⁵

X. Building the capacity of States to implement the legal regime for the oceans and seas

127. The General Assembly has over the years consistently emphasized the need for building the capacity of States, in particular of the least developed countries, SIDS and coastal African States, to fully implement UNCLOS, benefit from the sustainable development of the oceans and seas and participate fully in global and regional forums on ocean affairs and the law of the sea.²⁷⁶ This imperative is clearly expressed in the draft 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its related goals and targets.²⁷⁷

128. During the reporting period, a number of capacity-building activities were carried out that respond to the multiple requests made by the General Assembly, including in resolution 69/245. These included the delivery of training and development of capacity-building tools to support the implementation of UNCLOS and other instruments in a number of sectors, examples of which are provided throughout the report and below.

129. *Implementation of the Convention and related instruments.* Through participation in various conferences, meetings, workshops and training events, DOALOS provided information, advice and assistance to States, intergovernmental organizations and others with a view to promoting a better understanding of UNCLOS and the related agreements as the comprehensive regime which establishes rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources, and to promote the wider acceptance, uniform and consistent application and effective implementation of this regime.²⁷⁸

130. The Division has also developed and delivered a two-day briefing in Mogadishu for Parliamentarians of the Federal Republic of Somalia aimed at providing a better understanding of the Convention and related Agreements (October 2014). It also delivered a five-day in-depth workshop in Mogadishu for Somali Federal Government and regional officials on oceans and law of the sea (July 2015). A related gap analysis of the Somali legislative and institutional frameworks is also being undertaken. These activities were carried out under a project funded through the United Nations Trust Fund to Support Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. Furthermore, at the request of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Division participated in a joint seminar on the Convention and related issues for lawmakers and academics in Tehran (May 2015).

131. In addition, with a view to supporting the implementation of the Convention in a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral manner at the global level, the Division continued to implement two Fellowships.

²⁷⁴ See <http://www.lldc2conference.org/>.

²⁷⁵ See http://unohrlls.org/zambia_lldc_meeting_2015/ and <http://unohrlls.org/custom-content/uploads/2015/06/Livingstone-Call-for-Action.pdf>.

²⁷⁶ A/RES/69/245, Part II, in particular para. 9.

²⁷⁷ For example, see note 1, Goals 14.c and 17.9.

²⁷⁸ A list is available on the Division's website at: www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm.

132. The Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship on the Law of the Sea has trained 30 individuals from 26 Member States since its establishment. Mr. Teiniu, (Solomon Islands) was awarded the 2015 Fellowship. Given the importance of the Fellowship, an appeal is made for voluntary contributions to the trust fund as current funding will not allow for additional awards.

133. Since its establishment in 2004, the United Nations-Nippon Foundation Fellowship Programme (UNNFP) has trained 110 individuals from 67 Member States. Currently, ten individuals are undertaking their Fellowships,²⁷⁹ and ten new awards will be made in October 2015 for the 2016 cycle. Through the first Special Strategic Award, offered under the framework of the UNNFP, a customized 4-month programme is also being provided to a Government official of the Federal Republic of Somalia. Under the Alumni Programme of the UNNFP, a meeting marking the tenth anniversary of the Programme, hosted by the United Nations and The Nippon Foundation of Japan, was held in November 2014 in Tokyo. The meeting brought together more than 80 Alumni, as well as academic partners, and high-level Government and United Nations officials.

134. Capacity-building activities undertaken by other organizations have addressed, *inter alia*: maritime safety (see, for example, para. 22) and security (see, for example, paras. 47, 49, 50 and 54); maritime labour rights (see, for example, para. 32); sustainable development of oceans and seas (see, for example, paras. 61, 70, 77, 78, 83, 87, 94, 95 and 96); oceans and climate change and ocean acidification (see, for example, para. 121); SIDS (see, for example, paras. 122-123); and capacities for the settlement of disputes under Part XV of the Convention (see para. 10).

135. Sustained financing to support ocean-related activities, including capacity-building initiatives, in support of the full implementation of UNCLOS is critical. The importance of financing across the sustainable development agenda, including those elements related to capacity-building as well as oceans, has been underlined in the draft 2030 agenda for sustainable development,²⁸⁰ as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.²⁸¹ The latter directly addresses the capacity and financing for development nexus and stresses the importance of conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas for sustainable development, and further reaffirms that international law as reflected in UNCLOS, provides the relevant legal framework in this regard.²⁸²

136. The continued allocation of funding to projects relating to oceans and marine biodiversity through the sixth Global Environment Facility replenishment in April 2014 is a welcome step in this regard. However, while the implementation by developing countries of a number of multilateral agreements adopted in recent years has benefitted from financial resources allocated through a specific financial mechanism as provided in such agreements, activities aimed at supporting the implementation of UNCLOS have remained dependent on voluntary contributions from States, intergovernmental organizations and donors, as well as bilateral cooperation. The situation deserves

²⁷⁹ The 2015 Fellows are from: Bangladesh, Brazil, Cook Islands, Cuba, Georgia, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, and Tunisia.

²⁸⁰ For example, see note 1, paras. 41 and 63.

²⁸¹ A/RES/69/313.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, para. 64.

significant attention as it has negatively affected the extent, scale and sustainability of the assistance the Division and others can provide to developing States.

137. *Trust funds.* The Division administers eight voluntary trust funds.²⁸³ In addition, the Division is in the process of establishing a new trust fund pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/292 for the purpose of assisting developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, LLDCs and SIDS, in attending the meetings of the preparatory committee and intergovernmental conference on the development of an international legally-binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.²⁸⁴

138. It must be noted that in recent years, the demand on the trust funds has increased, while the number and size of contributions have decreased significantly (see also para. 132). There is thus an acute need for contributions to ensure that these trust funds can continue fulfill their mandates in supporting member States.

XI. Strengthening international cooperation and coordination

139. The General Assembly, taking into account that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach, has continued to emphasize the importance of and need to improve cooperation and coordination at national, regional and global levels, in accordance with UNCLOS, to support and supplement the efforts of each State in the implementation of UNCLOS. In this regard, it established the Informal Consultative Process to facilitate its work (see para. 59). Since 2000, the Consultative Process has considered a wide range of issues from the perspective of the three pillars of sustainable developments.²⁸⁵ It held its sixteenth meeting in April 2015, focusing on the timely topic of "Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic".²⁸⁶

140. As indicated in the various chapters of the report, efforts have also continued to strengthen cooperation at the regional level. For example, in January 2015, Heads of State and Governments of the African Union (AU) adopted "Agenda 2063", which, inter alia, aims to develop strategies to grow the African Blue/ocean and green economies.²⁸⁷ Subsequently, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of Eastern Africa of UNECA met in March 2015 under the theme "*Harnessing the Blue Economy for Eastern Africa's Development*".²⁸⁸ On 25 July 2015, the AU launched 2015 to 2025 as "the Decade of African Seas and Oceans", and held the first "African Day of the Seas and Oceans".²⁸⁹

141. At the sixteenth Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, discussions focussed on the role of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme in the post-2015 development agenda process, progress in the implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2013-2016, marine litter (see para. 99) and a roadmap for

²⁸³ See: www.un.org/Depts/los/general_assembly/general_assembly_reports.htm.

²⁸⁴ A/RES/69/292, para. 5.

²⁸⁵ See http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm.

²⁸⁶ A/70/78 and A/70/74.

²⁸⁷ Assembly/AU/Dec.565(XXIV), and Assembly/AU/5(XXIV).

²⁸⁸ <http://www.uneca.org/stories/experts-antanarivo-call-policy-handbook-blue-economy>.

²⁸⁹ See <http://pages.au.int/maritime/events/1st-african-day-seas-and-oceans-au-commission-hqs-addis-ababa-kickoff-decade-african>.

implementing visioning priorities for the next 10 years.²⁹⁰ With a general focus on ocean governance in Africa, the Abidjan Convention secretariat held the third meeting of the Panel of Experts on ocean governance in June 2015 (see also para. 91).

142. *UN-Oceans*. Under its revised terms of reference as approved by the General Assembly,²⁹¹ and with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy, UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on oceans and coastal issues, continued to give priority attention to the development of an online searchable database for an inventory of mandates and activities. In conformity with its mandate, the Focal Point of UN-Oceans provided information during the sixteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process on the work of UN-Oceans.²⁹² With a view to providing information to States on UN-Oceans members' activities relating to oceans and climate change and ocean acidification, UN-Oceans is planning to organize a side event at the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. A statement had already been delivered by the Focal Point of UN-Oceans both at the meeting of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice of the UNFCCC²⁹³ and at the World Oceans Day 2015 event organized by the IOC-UNESCO on the theme: "Ocean and Climate" in June 2015.²⁹⁴

XII. Conclusions

143. As described in the present report, the activities carried out by the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations demonstrate a general responsiveness to the need for action in relation to the current key ocean issues identified in General Assembly resolution 69/245. Tangible progress has been made relating to the implementation of specific provisions in the resolution, thus also confirming the important role of the General Assembly in stimulating concerted action on oceans and law of the sea issues.

144. Nonetheless, the health, resilience and productivity of the oceans have continued to deteriorate as also confirmed by the summary of the first global integrated marine assessment of the Regular Process. As States are increasingly looking to the oceans to further develop their economies, most areas in the oceans are negatively affected by unsustainable activities taking place at sea or on land, compounded by the impacts of climate change and the effects of ocean acidification.

145. The oceans have also become a place of human suffering as a result of the dramatic increase in unsafe mixed migration by sea, underscoring the need for urgent action to prevent loss of life at sea, including by upholding the integrity of the search and rescue regime and ensuring the delivery of persons rescued at sea to a place of safety.

²⁹⁰ http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/globalmeetings/default_ns.asp.

²⁹¹ See www.unep.org/regionalseas/globalmeetings/default_ns.asp.

²⁹¹ A/RES/68/70, annex.

²⁹² See www.unoceans.org.

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[http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_jun_2015/application/pdf/un_oceans_statement_long_final_draft_rev_\(3\).pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_jun_2015/application/pdf/un_oceans_statement_long_final_draft_rev_(3).pdf).

²⁹⁴ http://legal.un.org/ola/media/info_from_lc/mss/speeches/MSS_UN_Oceans_statement_UNESCO_WOD-8-June-2015.pdf.

146. In addition, while it is generally recognized that there is a need to implement an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to the management of oceans' activities, the focus has largely remained sectoral.

147. In facing these challenges, it will be necessary for the General Assembly, as the global institution having the competence to undertake an annual review of developments relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea to continue to provide firm guidance for effective actions by States and other stakeholders. Its comprehensive annual resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries attest to the scope and complexity of the issues covered by its review and the progress it has achieved over time in addressing them. Most recently, the Assembly's consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction through its BBNJ Working Group, led to the Assembly's adoption of a resolution on the development of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the issue. Furthermore, the entire draft of the first global integrated marine assessment has been completed and is now ready to be considered by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process. With regard to the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems, the Assembly has maintained under its review the actions taken by States and RFMOs/As in response to specific provisions of its resolutions, with a view to ensuring effective implementation of the measures therein and to make further recommendations, where necessary.

148. In addition to existing processes, mechanisms and tools, the Assembly is best placed to foster an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach to oceans and the law of the sea issues, as well as cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination, in accordance with UNCLOS. With respect to the draft 2030 sustainable development agenda, the General Assembly, as assisted by its processes on oceans, including the Informal Consultative Process, and inclusive of all relevant stakeholders, could be a key contributor to the systematic follow-up and review of Goal 14 and other ocean-related goals. Such review would include the progress made in meeting the commitment in Goal 14 to "enhance the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of 'The future we want'".

149. The United Nations system remains ready to provide its support, including in the area of capacity-building, which is crucial for achieving sustainable development and for enabling developing countries realize the benefits from the oceans and their resources, in a sustainable manner and in accordance with UNCLOS.