

**ADVANCE UNEDITED  
REPORTING MATERIAL**



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consideration and review of activities and developments relating to oceans and the law of the sea. It should be read in conjunction with other reports relevant to oceans and the law of the sea issued by the United Nations during the period under review.<sup>10</sup> It should also be read in combination with the more detailed contributions provided by the United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and bodies, as well as other intergovernmental organizations,<sup>11</sup> for which I express my gratitude.

## II. Legal and policy framework

10. During the period under review, the existing legal framework for oceans, which includes a large number of binding instruments, adopted and implemented at the global, regional and national levels, within the context of the Convention, continued to develop and expand. The conditions for entry into force for a number of global instruments were met.<sup>12</sup> Binding instruments, complemented by important non-binding instruments, such as the 2030 Agenda, as well as the annual resolutions of the General Assembly on

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to the 2006 Code of the Maritime Labour Convention to protect labour rights of seafarers captured as a result of piracy or armed robbery at sea.<sup>52</sup>

36. In other developments, a tripartite meeting on migrant fishers was convened by ILO in September 2017 to follow-up on a resolution on the promotion of welfare for fishers, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2007.<sup>53</sup> ILO also initiated work on decent working conditions in global supply chains, including seafood commodities.<sup>54</sup> The FAO supported stakeholders to establish sustainable fisheries policies, including def .



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continued to move forward with larger turbines and larger sized wind projects. Progress is also being made towards floating wind farms.<sup>68</sup>

47. In terms of other emerging ocean activities, in 2017 the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection identified deep sea mining and its impacts on the marine environment as a new issue for the attention of its sponsoring organizations.<sup>69</sup>

48. In this regard, during the reporting period, the International Seabed Authority (ISA) progressed its work in the development of the Mining Code as a priority matter. Following global stakeholder consultation on the draft regulations on exploitation for mineral resources in the Area, the Council of the Authority undertook its first substantive consideration of the draft text in July 2018 and issued a revised text. The Council also discussed development of an economic model for mineral exploitation in the Area and financial terms for future exploitation contracts. With respect to environmental impacts of seabed activities, the ISA continued development of regional environmental management plans for the Area,<sup>70</sup> envisaged as the primary means for delivery at the regional level of the Authority's environmental objectives.<sup>71</sup>

49. Subsequent to the first periodic review of the international regime of the Area pursuant to article 154 of the Convention, the Secretary-General of the ISA prepared a draft strategic plan, taking into account the views of stakeholders.<sup>72</sup> The first ever strategic plan was adopted by the Assembly at the twenty-fourth session, as amended, to guide the direction and aims of the ISA for a five-year period.<sup>73</sup>

50. In other developments, issues related to genetic resources, including digital sequence information on genetic resources,<sup>74</sup> a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism under the Nagoya Protocol,<sup>75</sup> and genetic resources and intellectual property

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the importance of the need for capacity-building in marine science, related knowledge and expertise, as well as marine infrastructure. The General Assembly has continued to recognize that promoting the voluntary transfer of technology is an essential aspect of building capacity in marine science.<sup>77</sup>

52. During the period under review, a number of activities and initiatives were undertaken to promote marine scientific research, increase research capacity of States and support the science-policy interface, including by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),<sup>78</sup> the

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rounds of regional workshops of the second cycle.<sup>85</sup> The first round of regional workshops, which was held in 2017, aimed to inform the scoping of the second world ocean assessment, raise awareness and provide information and receive feedback on the first World Ocean Assessment,<sup>86</sup> while the second round is being held in the second half of 2018 so as to, inter alia, inform the collection of regional-level information and data for the preparation of the second world ocean assessment.<sup>87</sup>

## ~~B. Sustainable use of living marine resources~~

~~57.~~ Ensuring the effectiveness of the science-policy interface in fisheries management is key to implementing the provisions of the Convention and the Agreement. The Informal Consultations of States Parties to the Agreement focused its thirteenth meeting on the topic “Science-policy interface” and raised key points relating to its strengthening in fisheries management.<sup>88</sup>

58. Given the importance of the world’s fisheries as key contributors to food security and nutrition, livelihoods and economic development, the sustainability of the world’s fish stocks remains a significant concern. The Convention and the Agreement provide a comprehensive regime for the conservation and sustainable management of living marine resources and are complemented by other legal and policy instruments, including the 2030 Agenda. SDG 14 committed the international community to effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, IUU fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, by 2020, in order to restore fish stocks.<sup>89</sup>

59. The FAO estimated that the percentage of stocks fished at biologically unsustainable levels (overfished, depleted and recovering stocks) has grown from 31.4 per cent in 2000 to 40 per cent in 2015.<sup>90</sup>

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develop technical guidelines for the estimation of the magnitude and geographic extent of IUU fishing. It also endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear and took note of a technical paper provided by FAO containing an overview of the implications of climate change for fisheries and aquaculture with a view to mapping

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66. Regarding rapid innovations in shipping technology, the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) explored the way maritime autonomous surface ship (MASS) operations can be addressed in IMO instruments, including in the form of a scoping exercise to identify IMO regulations that preclude, do not preclude or would not apply to MASS operations,







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81. International cooperation and coordination remains critical to achieving the objectives of the Convention and the integrated management and sustainable development of the oceans and seas. It is well-recognized that the problems of ocean space, including the challenges to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and their resources, are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach. The General Assembly annually reaffirms the unified character of the Convention and the vital importance of preserving its integrity. It has, since the entry into force of the Convention, annually considered and reviewed developments at the global level under one consolidated agenda item on oceans and the law of the sea, as the global institution having the competence to undertake such a review. It also established the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP) to assist in its functions.<sup>123</sup> The nineteenth meeting of the ICP, held in June 2018, provided a unique forum for comprehensive discussions on anthropogenic underwater noise, facilitating the exchange of views among multiple stakeholders and improving coordination and cooperation between States and competent agencies. The effectiveness and utility of the ICP will be reviewed by the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. The General Assembly will also review the terms of reference of UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations system, which it had deferred in 2017 until its seventy-third session.<sup>124</sup> These reviews provide an opportunity to consider whether international cooperation and coordination need to be further strengthened.

82. During the reporting period, UN-Oceans, for which the United Nations Legal Counsel acts as focal point, strengthened and promoted coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to ocean and coastal issues, focusing on





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Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

93. A new capacity-building initiative related to ocean governance under the “United Nations-Nippon Foundation Sustainable Ocean Programme” was launched in 2018. Thereunder, the Division awarded four Critical Needs Fellowships to applicants from Cambodia, Guyana, Papua New Guinea and Senegal, which took place from April to June 2018. It delivered two trainings related to the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference to 45 representatives from 42 States in April and May 2018. In July 2018, 11 Thematic Fellowships focusing on implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the Convention and ocean governance frameworks were awarded to nationals of Fiji; Gambia; Lesotho; Myanmar; Samoa; Sri Lanka; St. Lucia; Sweden; Timor-Leste; Togo and Tonga. The fellowship, which is held from August to December 2018, will consist of four months of in-person training at United Nations Headquarters, including briefings and activities to provide first-hand knowledge and insight into implementation of ocean affairs frameworks.

*Technical assistance to States*

94. Jointly with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Division began to implement a United Nations Development Account funded project to assist Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica in developing evidence-based and policy coherent oceans economy and trade strategies to support beneficiary countries in realizing

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98. These impacts threaten safety of life, food security and livelihoods and underscore the urgent need for more focus on the human dimension of the oceans. This is also so visibly illustrated in the context of the ongoing and large-