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Resilient nations.*

## **UNDP Inputs to Background Note, 2020 Ocean Conference**

### **1. Activities, challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of SDG 14;**

With an active Oceans portfolio of about US \$300 million, UNDP is supporting implementation of SDG 14 across nearly all the targets. The portfolio includes support to advancing integrated, ecosystem-based, cross-sectoral approaches to the sustainable management and governance of ten of the world's Large Marine Ecosystems (~80 countries) where the vast majority of ocean biological and economic activity occur. Long term cooperation with the GEF and the International Maritime Organization on greening the shipping industry includes programs addressing ship-mediated invasive species (ballast water, biofouling) as well as improving the sector's energy efficiency. Drawing from UNDP's experience in these and other ocean programs, some key challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of SDG 14 include:

- a. SDG 14.1 - While a number of governments and private companies have taken steps to reduce plastics pollution, these are dispersed, ad hoc and uncoordinated. Ocean plastics pollution needs to be addressed in a more holistic and comprehensive manner via consideration of a global legal framework that would aim to harmonize standards and practices for plastic resins, products, recovery, recycling and re-use, that collectively serve to close the loop on plastics production and consumption; by creating harmonized global standards, such a framework would catalyse significant innovation across the entire plastics supply chain, from resins to product design to product recovery and recycling;
- b. SDG 14.1 - Catalysing action on ocean nutrient pollution for which progress has been very modest since SDGs adoption in 2015; this could include a range of policy, regulatory, economic and financial reforms and tools manifested through national/regional river basin commissions towards dramatically reducing nutrient pollution, as well as aggressive action to reduce 'hot spot' nutrient pollution from untreated wastewater especially in coastal cities;
- c. SDG 14.3 minimize ocean acidification can only be achieved if the Paris Agreement commitments on GHG reduction are adhered to; while actions such as investments in blue carbon can provide incremental improvements, major impacts can only be realized if GHGs emissions are significantly reduced in the next ten and subsequent years;

- d. SDG 14.4 - Significant effort is still required to eliminate the approximately 30 percent of fish stocks that are overexploited or collapsed; this includes strengthening both regional and national fisheries management organizations in areas such as monitoring, control and surveillance, application of ecosystem-based approaches, use of economic instruments, etc. The experience and progress seen in the West and Central Pacific Tuna fishery, a case study in successful implementation of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement supported by UNDP/GEF for the last 20 years, is exemplary and should be reviewed and considered;
- e. While progress on SDG 14.5, conserve at least 10% of marine and coastal areas, has been notable, work remains on ensuring both thematic and regional representativeness of MPAs particularly in developing regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America/Caribbean;
- f. With some 95 percent of their collective sovereign territory ocean vs. land, Small Island Developing States are urgently in need of technical and financial assistance to realize their “Blue Economy” (BE) aspirations (SDG 14.7), including both ‘new’ business lines (ocean energy, aquaculture, marine genetic resources, etc.) as well as recovering economic losses due to degraded marine ecosystems. This includes BE assessments, identification of BE investment needs and opportunities, strategic planning support, and on-the-ground BE pilots and demonstrations. Building upon these needs, UNDP is launching its new ‘SIDS Offer’ including Blue Economy as one of three pillars.
- g. SDG 14.b - While small scale fishers account for roughly half the global fish catch for direct human consumption, they are significantly disadvantaged compared to industrial fishers in terms of access to both resources and markets. Developing country fishing nations need assistance in creating a policy and regulatory environment that helps to ‘level the playing field’ for small scale fishers and allow them to realize the full economic potential of their coastal resources, in turn creating jobs, livelihoods and reducing poverty.

## 2. Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation;

Sound science, access to necessary data and information, and the effective utilization of such data and information by decision makers are all instrumental to effective ocean management and governance. UNDP’s work on ocean governance consistently builds upon detailed assessments of status and trends in marine ecosystems drawing from the best available data and science. Each of the ten shared Large Marine Ecosystem and regional fisheries programs UNDP supports conducts an initial ‘Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis’ (TDA) which identifies, characterizes and prioritizes marine environmental issues and challenges based on available data and information. The TDA then informs multi-country negotiation of a regional strategic action program (SAP) of agreed policy, regulatory and institutional reforms, and investments, required to move the LME towards sustainable use. Nearly all the LMEs UNDP supports have completed this ‘foundational/enabling’ phase and are now at the

stage of active implementation through a wide range of technical assistance and capacity building activities, including continued scientific capacity building through exercises such as joint LME assessments, training of scientists, etc.

In order to catalyse progress on many of the SDG 14 targets, special effort needs to be placed on innovative approaches. These can include not only technological innovations, but also innovations pertaining to policy, regulatory, economic, financial, institutional and stakeholder engagement. New innovations are welcome and needed, but equally important are transfer, adaptation, replication and scaling up of innovations proven elsewhere. Innovations are particularly needed to accelerate progress on SDG targets 14.1, 14.4, 14.7 and 14.b.

In support of this need, UNDP will soon launch its Ocean Innovation Challenge (OIC). The Ocean Innovation Challenge is a unique new mechanism that has been designed to accelerate progress on SDG14 via the identification, financing, advising and mentoring of truly innovative, entrepreneurial and creative approaches towards ocean and coastal restoration and protection that sustains livelihoods and advances the 'blue economy'. Towards maximizing and catalyzing impact, OIC seeks innovations that are transferable, replicable and scalable. For the purposes of the OIC, "innovation" can include both truly new approaches, or the transfer or adaptation of existing proven approaches to new contexts and/or locales. The Ocean Innovation Challenge will issue a series of staggered 'Ocean Challenges' or Requests for Proposals, each focused on a specific SDG14 target. Initial concepts may be submitted by public or private entities, including governments, private companies (including start-ups), NGO/CSO, United Nations entities, academic institutions, and intergovernmental organizations.

### 3. Developing partnerships for the implementation of SDG 14

Partnerships are essential and indispensable towards the achievement of each and every SDG 14 target, building on the comparative advantages, physical presence, experience and networks of different partners. Partnerships are the norm in UNDP's Ocean Governance Programme, most projects involve one or more partners; key UNDP partners working on ocean projects and programmes include UN agencies (IMO, FAO, IOC/UNESCO, UNEP, UNOPS, UNIDO, etc.); intergovernmental organizations (Forum Fisheries Agency, Cartagena Convention, Benguela Current Commission, PEMSEA, ASEAN, Nairobi Convention, Sargasso Sea Commission, etc.); NGOs (WWF, CI, SFP, etc.); and philanthropists (Paul Allen Family Foundation) and the private sector (through World Ocean Council and other mechanisms).