

Keeping the Momentum for Ocean Action Webinar Series: Asia-Pacific Stakeholder Participation and Engagement, 3 June 2020

SUMMARY

1. Background

Convened by the General Assembly of the United Nations and co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal, the “[2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development](#)” will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, under the overarching theme: “*Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions*”.

In light of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and as per the General Assembly decision, the co-hosts of the Conference, the governments of Kenya and Portugal in consultation with the General Assembly, will decide on future dates for the Conference, including timelines for the preparatory process.

With the aim of keeping the momentum towards Ocean action, the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs is working with partners in the organization of a series of sectoral webinars to connect, mobilize and bring new ideas from stakeholders towards the preparation and outreach of the UN Ocean Conference, including the compilation of new voluntary Commitments of Ocean Action and progress on previous commitments made in connection with the 2017 UN Ocean Conference.

2. Asia-Pacific Stakeholder Engagement and Participation Webinar



KEEPING THE MOMENTUM FOR OCEAN ACTION SERIES

ASIA-PACIFIC STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Engaging Asia-Pacific stakeholders in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, Life Below Water, is essential in stopping marine plastic pollution and creating ocean and climate synergies. Join our webinar to mobilize Asia-Pacific stakeholders, share information and brainstorm ideas on how to strengthen the momentum for ocean action in the Asia-Pacific region during the preparatory process of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference.

This session of the four-part series “Keeping the Momentum for Ocean Action” is a joint effort from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2020
 10:00 - 11:30 A.M. ICT (BANGKOK TIME)

Register here by 1 June:
<https://bit.ly/AsiaPacificMomentum>   

As a part of DSDG’s webinar series “**Keeping the Momentum for Ocean Action**”, and a joint-effort by UN DESA (DSDG) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and in collaboration with the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS), the webinar mobilized representatives from the Asia-Pacific region, shared information and collected ideas and proposals on how to keep the momentum towards Ocean Action and further raise engagement of Asia-Pacific stakeholders in the lead-up to the UN Ocean Conference.

The thematic scope of the webinar included some of the pressing environmental challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular:

- a. **Marine Plastic pollution:** Considering the large volumes of plastic production and consumption in the region, stakeholders such as the private sector and individuals have

the capacity to reduce the demand for plastics and catalyze a transformation in the plastic industry by changing social norms and shifting towards a plastic-free economy.

- b. ***Ocean and Climate synergies:*** The discussion on the role of the ocean moderating climate change and the interlinkage between SDG14 and SDG13 embraces the active role of all stakeholders. The carbon footprint on land carries impacts on the ocean. All stakeholders, including those in landlocked countries, may mitigate this burden through changes in consumption and lifestyles in urban and rural areas on land, which would consequently benefit the ocean.

A total of **339 participants** from around **55 countries** registered to attend the webinar. Around **90 participants** followed the session on 3 June and almost **800** have watched the recording on YouTube as of 10 August 2020.

Valuable contributions were presented by a wealth of voices during the event, including three expert panelists working to address marine plastic pollution and ocean-climate synergies and 13 interventions from diverse stakeholders from all over the region. The inputs, discussions, and interventions underlined the overall need and willingness of Asia-Pacific stakeholders to keep the momentum for ocean action in the lead-up to the Ocean Conference and the pivotal role the Asia-Pacific region has in meeting targets for SDG 13 and SDG 14. The discussions also emphasized the vital role of the ocean for the peoples of Asia and the Pacific. A strong presence and commitment of the Asia-Pacific youth was prominent in this event, underscoring initiatives from across the region.

3. Summary of Discussions

3.1 Opening Remarks



In her opening remarks, **Ms. Lotta Tahtinen**, Chief of the Outreach and Partnerships Branch, from the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), underlined the importance of incorporating Asia-Pacific stakeholders in the global mobilization towards SDG 14 implementation. Ms. Tahtinen emphasized DSDG’s work in promoting a series of virtual activities, including online consultations and open webinars, to incorporate voices from diverse stakeholders towards keeping the momentum for ocean action. With events like this one and others targeting different sectors, Ms. Tahtinen expressed her hope that the virtual activities continue to inspire stakeholders to maintain the mobilization towards the UN Ocean Conference and to register new voluntary commitments for ocean action.



After presenting a [video](#) highlighting the work of ESCAP towards the protection of the ocean for the Asia-Pacific region, **Mr. Stefanos Fotiou**, Director of the Environment and Development Division of ESCAP, underlined that ESCAP has a very clear mandate, especially after ESCAP Resolution 76/1 of 21 May 2020, to protect the ocean and will continue to make partnerships with all sectors to make progress with SDG 14 despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Fotiou acknowledged the role of the UNSG’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ambassador Peter Thomson, in the development of the Ocean workstream at ESCAP and his reiterated support on the annual Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean.

3.1 Keynote Address



In the [keynote address](#), the Secretary General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, **Ambassador Peter Thomson**, reassured that the UN Ocean Conference would be held as soon as circumstances allow. Preparations are continuing on a step-by-step basis and Portugal and Kenya are resolute in their determination for a conference that will break new ground for multilateral processes and that will meet the targets set by international agreements.

Marine plastic pollution and ocean-climate synergies are two issues of utmost importance for the Asia-Pacific region. Ambassador Thomson underlined specific examples of consequences that the region is already observing, such as mass coral bleaching and sea level rising, as these problems have not been put at the forefront of policymaking. Ambassador Thomson strongly emphasized the commitment the Asia-Pacific region must make to the “blue-green recovery road” as they build back from the COVID-19 pandemic and avoid returning back to the carbon-dependent economy that exacerbates these issues.

3.2 Panel Discussion

A panel discussion provided concrete inputs and recommendations as to how Asia-Pacific stakeholders can specifically address marine plastic pollution and ocean-climate synergies so that the region can recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Brajesh Dubey, a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), introduced his co-publication commissioned by the High level panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy: [“Leveraging Multi-Target Strategies to Address Plastic Pollution in the Context of an Already Stressed Economy”](#) as a resource for citizens to take responsibility for

and improve their own locality’s pollution. **Ms. Fithriyyah Iskandar**, President of Seangle - Indonesia Chapter Pontianak, shared her experience advocating for accelerated action in Indonesia to improve plastic pollution policy to protect the health of the country’s water systems and citizens. Lastly, **Mr. Reed Ali**, Project Coordinator at the Alliance for Future Generations Fiji, described his organization’s efforts to mobilize youth in Fiji as the country and coastal communities adapt to the rising sea-levels and assist with the relocation of dozens of affected citizens.

3.1 Interactive Dialogue

The next session included interventions from thirteen pre-selected speakers¹ focusing on ideas and inputs on how the Asia-Pacific region can build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic in supporting SDG 14 implementation. Interventions were made by:

- **Initiative for Global Resilience**, Ms. Barbara Ewals (Thailand)
- [Environmental Protection Center](#), Ms. Shi Zhe (China)
- [Sea Shepherd Australia](#), Ms. Marina Hansen (Australia)
- [United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability](#), Ms. Evonne Yiu (Japan)
- [Mojo Design Studios](#), Ms. Runna Ray (India)
- **Project Mariknows**, Mr. Harold Banggay (Philippines)
- [Oxfam](#), Mr. Jyotiraj Patra (Cambodia)
- **Common Seas**, Mr. Peter Chauvel (United Kingdom)
- **Poona Institute of Management Sciences and Entrepreneurship**, Mr. Mohd Talha Amhad (USA)
- [Ocean Policy Research Center of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation](#), Mr. Masanori Kobayashi (Japan)
- **Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization**, Ms. Denise Hardesty (Australia)
- [Plymouth Marine Laboratory](#), Ms. Melanie Austen (United Kingdom)
- **The Climate Reality Project**, Mr. Ritujah Phukan (India)

4. More Information

- [Recording of meeting](#)
- [PowerPoint presentation](#)
- [Keeping the Momentum for Ocean Action series page](#)

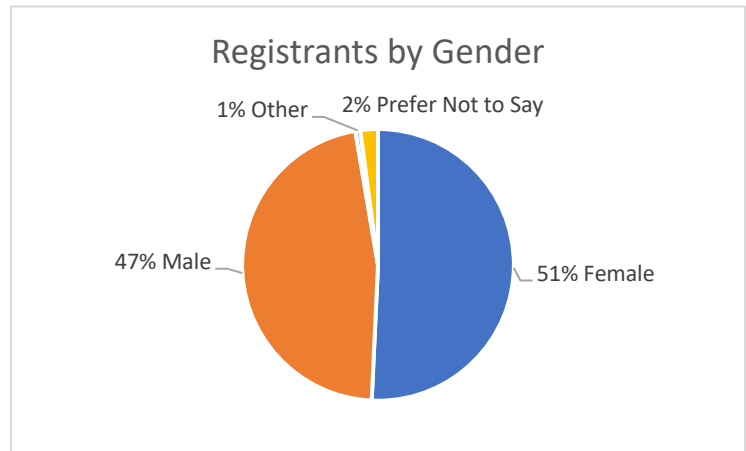
¹ Speakers indicated their interest in making an intervention when registering to attend the webinar. The review of applications was conducted by UN DESA and ESCAP.

Annex 1: Analysis of Registrants to event as of 19 May (9AM)

339 registered participants from **55** countries.

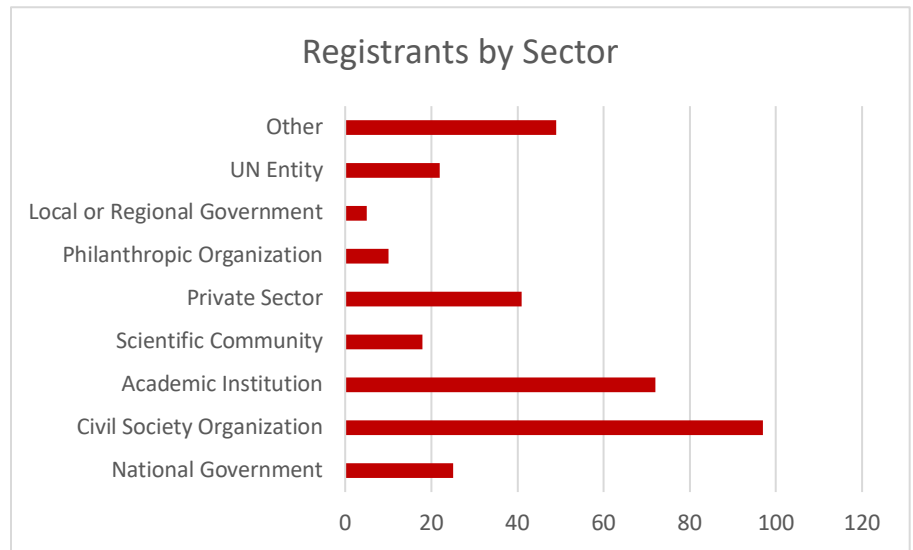
The gender of the registered participants is distributed as:

- 51% Female
- 47% Male
- 1% Other
- 2% Prefer not to say



The registrants are distributed by sector as:

- 7% National Government
- 29% Civil Society Organization
- 21% Academic Institution
- 5% Scientific Community
- 12% Private Sector
- 3% Philanthropic Organization
- 1% Local or Regional Government
- 6% UN Entity
- 14% Other



Annex 2: Analysis of Feedback

This analysis reflects the outcomes of a survey sent to all 339 registered participants to the webinar in order to understand overall satisfaction, relevance to the audience’s work and additional inputs regarding stakeholder engagement. **48 feedback inputs** were received. The main outcomes are reflected below:

Survey Outcomes:

Out of the 48 total respondents, 42 attended the webinar and 6 did not.

Of the respondents that did attend the webinar (42), **95% said that they were very or extremely satisfied by the webinar.**

Almost all responding attendees (over 97%) were satisfied with each of these event aspects: date and time, speakers, interventionists, overall management of the call and sound and video quality.

Highlights: Reasons for joining the webinar:

- “To learn more about how we can protect our ocean in the time of COVID-19”.
- “Asia-Pacific is a key region for sustainable development and marine affairs. This event will keep me updated with voices and ideas of stakeholders in this area.”
- “To learn about what is being done across the region and the different approaches being implemented.”
- “Our organization has members in Asia-Pacific and would like to become more involved about the issues in this region.”

76% of responding attendees found the content of the webinar to be relevant to their work.

86% of responding attendees reported that they are very likely to participate in UNDESA/ESCAP events in the future.

Annex 3: Event Agenda

<p>10:00 – 10:10</p>	<p>Welcome Remarks Ms. Lotta Tahtinen, Chief, Outreach and Partnerships Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), UN-DESA Mr. Stefanos Fotiou, Director of the Environment and Development Division, ESCAP, Moderator</p>
<p>10:10 - 10:20</p>	<p>Keeping the Momentum towards Ocean Action for Stakeholders in Asia-Pacific <i>Keynote address by UNSG’s Special Envoy for the Ocean Ambassador Peter Thomson (via video message)</i></p>
<p>10:20– 10:50</p>	<p>Engaging Asia-Pacific Stakeholders for Ocean Action: Marine Plastic Pollution and Ocean-Climate Synergies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brajesh Dubey (India) - Professor, Department of Civil Engineering at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) with nearly 20 years of research, teaching, training and industrial outreach experience, has authored/co-authored more than 200 publications.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Fithriyyah Iskandar (Indonesia) - President of Seangle - Indonesia Chapter Pontianak, Environmental & Youth Activist (marine debris, ocean-climate science) • Mr. Raeed Ali (Fiji) - Project Coordinator, Alliance for Future Generations Fiji [AFG], Environmental & Youth Activist (climate empowerment and plastics)
10:50 – 11:25	Interactive dialogue Interventions from selected speakers (different constituencies)
11:25 – 11:30	Next steps and Closing remarks