

**Nineteenth meeting of UN-Oceans**

7- 8 February 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

Summary report

1. UN-Oceans held its nineteenth face-to-face meeting from 7 to 8 February 2019. The meeting was hosted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in Geneva, Switzerland. In accordance with the terms of reference of UN-Oceans, the meeting was convened by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs (DOALOS/OLA), as focal point of UN-Oceans.

2. In addition to representatives of DOALOS/OLA and the WMO, participants in the meeting included representatives of the following organizations and entities: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Secretariat (DESA), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC of UNESCO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The names of all participants are listed in Annex IV to this report.

Items 1 and 2. Opening of the meeting, welcome and opening remarks

3. On behalf of the focal point of UN-Oceans, DOALOS/OLA opened the meeting and thanked WMO for hosting the 19th meeting face-to-face meeting of UN-Oceans. DOALOS/OLA also welcomed participants including new members from CITES and the UNFCCC.

4. The Secretary-General of WMO, Mr. Petteri Taalas, also welcomed participants and delivered opening remarks. Mr. Taalas highlighted key points of the proposed reform of WMO as the United Nations specialized agency on weather, climate and water, including regarding enhanced engagement and collaboration with partners (see power point presentation as sent by email to UN-Oceans members).

Item 3 and 4. Election of Chair and adoption of the draft agenda

5. In accordance with the terms of reference of UN-Oceans and upon the nomination by DOALOS/OLA seconded by IOC of UNESCO, Mr. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of WMO was elected Chair of the 19th meeting of UN-Oceans.

6. The Chair called attention to the draft agenda and recalled that it had been sent to all members for comments. He noted that all comments received had been reflected in the final draft agenda and called for its adoption. The meeting adopted the draft agenda without amendments (see Annex I). The Chair turned to the draft organization of work and noted that the schedule of agenda items was only indicative (see Annex II). As reflected in the organization of work distributed prior to the meeting, participants were informed by DOALOS/OLA that items on the agenda would be taken up in order so as to allow virtual participation from DOALOS/OLA in New York and any other members participating in the meeting remotely as well as to accommodate a request from the representative of IMO with regard to information on the 50th anniversary of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).

Item 5. Progress in the implementation of the UN-Oceans 2018 Work Programme

United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)

7. The Executive Secretary of IOC of UNESCO, Mr. Vladimir Ryabinin and Mr. Julian Barbière, Head, Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section (IOC of UNESCO) provided information on essential elements relating to the planning of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

8. Mr. Ryabinin recalled the United Nations General Assembly's invitation to UN-Oceans to collaborate in the development of the implementation plan of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and thanked members for their contributions. He emphasized that he viewed such cooperation as a joint venture towards making ocean science breakthroughs and developing societal science, including through the fostering of partnerships for sustainable and healthy oceans. He considered that the UN Decade could address capacity needs, develop ocean literacy, and the development of policies, including regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Mr. Ryabinin highlighted that one of the main objectives of the Decade could be to acquire and share data about the oceans. He invited UN-Oceans members to reflect on how they could best contribute to the UN Decade through, in particular, flag ship projects.

9. Mr. Barbière provided additional information on the establishment of an Executive Planning Group and its terms of reference which include providing guidance on the form and structure of the Decade, the establishment of national committees, the convening of a series of workshops to assess the state of the ocean research and the Decade objectives. He also informed members of UN-Oceans of the convening in Denmark from 13 to 15 May, of the first global consultative and planning meeting to discuss how science can contribute to the sustainable development agenda (see also email to UN-Oceans members dated 27 February 2019).

10. Mr. Barbière invited members to communicate information on the Decade to their own constituencies, actively participate in the global consultative and planning meeting as well as the regional workshops and other planning meetings to be announced. He further invited UN-Oceans to provide input through UN-Oceans on potential Decade's initiatives, possibly with the view to developing inter-agency initiatives. He suggested the establishment of a task force to coordinate UN-Oceans inputs into the Decade and to discuss what is the best way forward for the Decade but also how each UN-Oceans member can contribute to its development and implementation.

11. UN-Oceans members discussed a number of issues including the aim of the Decade and how it would interact with other ocean science related initiatives (for e.g., under UNEP, UNFCCC, DESA etc) noting the fragmented landscape for ocean science and the need to draw in all relevant stakeholders including the academic communities. IAEA highlighted that it was important for science to be impartial to be credible. The need to facilitate the involvement of small island developing States through for example their national focal points was highlighted. The importance of outreach particularly to commercial owners of data, continued raising of awareness about the Decade until its commencement in 2021, as well as the need to develop joint planning to be proactive rather than reactive were highlighted. UN-Oceans members also made suggestions about possible areas of focus for actions for the Decade, for e.g., to encourage ocean observations or operational oceanography, ocean mapping and developing training or capacity development in marine science. The importance for the Decade to provide for open data that is usable and used by stakeholders was emphasized.

12. Members also identified a number of events where information on the UN Decade and its activities could be propagated, such as during the 20th meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP), United Nations Headquarters in New York, 10-14 June; the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), United Nations Headquarters in New York, 9-18 July; the 2019 Climate Change Summit, United Nations Headquarters in New York, 23 September; and the CITES Animal Committee meeting in January 2020. DOALOS/OLA highlighted in particular that the ICP meeting will focus its discussions on "Ocean Science and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development" with the view to contributing not only to the Decade, but also to advance ocean science by identifying and addressing gaps in knowledge and ocean science as well as with the view to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

13. The Decade was identified as an opportunity for UN-Oceans to add value to its work and as an opportune area to showcase collaboration. It was suggested that UN-Oceans could act a think tank on the Decade and develop a strategy on how and what kind of inputs it could make towards a successful Decade.

14. IOC of UNESCO proposed the establishment of a Contact Group within UN-Oceans to facilitate the provision of inputs and guidance to the preparatory phase of the Decade. The Group would operate until the end of the planning phase (end of 2020).

15. As an initial set of tasks, the Group would:
- Contribute inputs to the organization of Global Planning Meetings and regional consultation meetings (identification of topics, speakers, dissemination of save the date within respective constituencies);
 - Assist with the identification and engagement of institutional stakeholders into the planning process, and contribute to communication activities during that phase;
 - Review and provide inputs to the core documents being prepared by the Executive Planning Group;
 - Brainstorm on the development of potential Decade initiatives to be developed in an inter-agency context.
16. IOC of UNESCO offered to coordinate the Group and to identify another coordinator from the members that have expressed interest to be part of the Group. Those UN-Oceans members that are interested in joining the Group were requested to inform IOC of UNESCO. The Group would work by correspondence and would organize regular teleconferences.
17. **Action point and/or key message**
- UN-Oceans members agreed to set up an open-ended group as proposed by the IOC of UNESCO with the view to determining how UN-Oceans members would best contribute to and benefit from the implementation of the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
 - IOC of UNESCO invited others to join in the co-coordination of the UN-Oceans Group on the Decade.
 - UN-Oceans members will communicate to IOC of UNESCO their interest to participate in the established Group.
 - IOC of UNESCO will send the official logo for the Decade to all members for their use.

Organization of UN-Oceans side events on the UN-Oceans voluntary commitment

18. The Chair recalled that the UN-Oceans commitment made at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably Use Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development” (the 2017 Ocean Conference), calls for, the provision of briefings at major intergovernmental meetings to inform participants of current ocean-related regulatory and policy frameworks as well as relevant activities. Such briefings could take the form of side events, workshops, dialogues in the margins of international meetings or conferences of parties or at relevant regional events.

19. Upon invitation from the Chair, DOALOS/OLA also recalled that in line with the commitment made by UN-Oceans at the 2017 Ocean Conference, and in accordance with the agreed key points at the UN-Oceans face-to-face meeting held in March 2018 in Paris and reaffirmed at the meeting held in September 2018, several UN-Oceans side events were held in 2018, as follows:

- At the first session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the

conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ IGC): *“Relevant regulatory and policy frameworks governing the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) and the activities of UN-Oceans”*, New York, 12 September 2018

- CBD-COP14: *“United Nations Support and Coordination for Achieving Global Goals for Marine Biodiversity: Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Beyond”*, Sharm-el Sheikh, 22 November 2018.
- UNFCCC COP24: *“Optimising the integration of ocean-related issues in Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14”*, Katowice, 7 December 2018.
- Sustainable Blue Economy Conference: *“How can implementation of international law and policy frameworks contribute to a sustainable ocean-based economy?”*, Nairobi, 26 November 2018.

20. Representatives from UNFCCC, IOC of UNESCO, UNDP and DOALOS/OLA provided comments on the organization of the above-mentioned UN-Oceans side events. Members suggested that it would be important for organizers to produce short written reports on discussions during UN-Oceans side events on the implementation of its voluntary commitment. Such reports would be useful within the context of the Communities of Ocean Action and the anticipated 2020 Ocean Conference.

21. The Chair invited suggestions for possible future side events at meetings to be held in 2019. Members suggested several possibilities as follows:

- WMO suggested a possible UN-Oceans side event at the “Ocean dialogue”, a parallel event to be organized in preparation for the Eighteenth World Meteorological Congress (Geneva, 3 to 14 June 2019) and, at the Second Multihazard Early Warning Conference, (Geneva, 13 – 14 May 2019).
- UNFCCC welcomed the opportunity to hold another UN-Oceans side at COP25 (Santiago de Chile, 2-13 December 2019) noting the opportunity of Earth Information Day and the publication of the IPCC on “The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate”.
- UNCTAD suggested, subject to further information, holding a side event at the Climate Change Summit (September 2019) and within the context of the meetings of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- DOALOS/OLA confirmed it was ready to host an UN-Oceans side event in the margins of the 20th meeting of the ICP, New York, 10-14 June to focus on marine science, the legal/policy framework for marine scientific research and activities of members in promoting marine science and research for sustainable development.

22. UNEP informed members that only States are entitled to hold and propose side events during the UN Environment Assembly meetings. Ms. Lisa Svensson, Director, suggested that UNEP had been invited to participate in a side event co-organized by Canada and Kenya during UNEA-4 on “Building Global Momentum on Marine Plastics Litter” at which a UN-Oceans message or information could be provided, Nairobi, 11 March 2019.

23. **Action point and/or key message** – The following organizations committed to hold UN-Oceans side events implementing the UN-Oceans voluntary commitment registered at the 2017 Ocean Conference.
- DOALOS, at the ICP-20 at United Nations Headquarters in New York in June 2019.
 - The UNFCCC at COP25 in Santiago, Chile, in December 2018 including within the framework the High-level information event, Special event on IPCC Special Reports and Ocean Action Day at COP25.
 - Members attending any of the above-mentioned events will be invited to participate in and contribute to the organization of those events.

Follow-up to the 2017 Ocean Conference, including support of the activities of the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean: Communities of Ocean Action

24. Upon invitation from the Chair, Ms. Madhushree Chatterjee, Chief, Natural Resource and Interlinkages Branch, Oceans and Climate Branch (DESA) introduced this agenda item. She recalled the purpose of establishing the Communities of Ocean Action (COAs) and highlighted the importance of the work carried out by them as reported on at the first meeting of COAs Co-focal points and/or Sherpas, in Nairobi on 25 November 2018. She informed participants that the second meeting was scheduled to take place in Jeju (Republic of Korea) in May and provided information on its format. She invited all COAs to provide their mid-term assessments.

25. She also called attention to an article published in the Journal “Science” on the voluntary commitments, including those made as part of the outcome 2017 UN Ocean Conference, entitled: “OCEAN GOVERNANCE - From voluntary commitments to ocean sustainability: A common pledge and review system is needed”. A letter drafted in consultation with the Special Envoy for the Ocean, Ambassador Peter Thomson, was sent to the Editor of the Journal from DESA.

26. Upon invitation from the Chair, representatives from IAEA, UNDP, IOC of UNESCO, UNEP and DOALOS/OLA provided some comments and shared some lessons learned about their experience in co-leading COAs including methods of work and challenges.

Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14) and development of a methodology for the indicator of 14c1

27. The Chair reminded participants that this was an ongoing important task on the UN-Oceans programme of work. He invited DOALOS/OLA to provide an update on the development of a methodology for the SDG target 14.c.1 as custodian agency for the indicator.

28. DOALOS/OLA recalled that as discussed at the previous face-to-face meetings of UN-Oceans (17th and 18th meetings), a revised proposed methodology for indicator 14.c was presented on 16 November in the margins of the second round of informal consultations on the draft General Assembly resolution on oceans and the law of the sea at the 73rd session to again seek States’ feedback and to invite volunteers to participate in pilot testing. DOALOS further recalled that this was the third side event hosted by DOALOS during 2018, with a view to progressing on the development of the methodology. Previous side events were held in June

(in the margins of the Meeting of States Parties to UNCLOS), and in October 2018 (in the margins of the first round of informal consultations on the Omnibus resolution).

29. The methodology presented at the November side event attempted to address the concerns and other views that had been expressed by Member States during the previous side event on the matter in October. An explanatory note to facilitate consideration by Member States and to provide some clarifications and background information on the process for the development of a methodology was distributed. Principal revisions included: (a) further simplifying/clarifying the wording of the questions; (b) further streamlining the list of instruments; and (c) proposing that States might choose 10 instruments (including UNCLOS) from the list in responding to the questionnaire (rather than responding in respect to all instruments on the list).

30. Joining remotely from New York, Ms. Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli, Director (DOALOS) explained that since, the review of all indicators is scheduled for 2020, there is some urgency in progressing the development of the methodology this year. DOALOS suggested to hold a dedicated meeting with Member States to discuss the development of the methodology to achieve the necessary buy-in to move forward with the proposed methodology, settle on a list of instruments that is acceptable to States and in particular to generate volunteers to participate in a pilot testing phase, which is a pre-requisite for the methodology to be approved by the Inter-Agency Experts Group on SDGs indicators (IAEG). IOC of UNESCO confirmed that for the IAEG to move an indicator from tier III to tier II, the methodology had to be endorsed at the global level. DOALOS added that the objective was to have the methodology for target 14c endorsed by the General Assembly in its annual General Assembly resolution on oceans and the law of the sea.

31. In the discussion that ensued, UN-Oceans members discussed some of the points of the methodology highlighting that for many instruments information was already being collected and sometimes available on the organization's website. IMO referred to their country maritime profiles, and audit schemes on a subset of instruments although not all related information was kept in the public domain.

32. UN-Oceans members expressed their support to the DOALOS proposal to further consult with Members States and suggested that as part of an evolutionary process, it would be up to Member States to also consider reporting on different instruments relating to UNCLOS, citing the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea as an example.

33. **Action point and/or key message**

- UN-Oceans took note of the shortened list of instruments, along the lines of the proposed list submitted by DOALOS to the meeting.
- UN-Oceans agreed that DOALOS/OLA will further consult with Member States to move forward with the approval of the methodology for submission to the IAEG and upgrade of the indicator from tier III to tier II.
- Members suggested that as part of an evolutionary process for the questionnaire, the long list of instruments could be considered a living document.

Item 6. Activities or events of interest for possible collaboration among members

World Oceans Days 2019 and 2020

34. Upon the invitation from the Chair, DOALOS/OLA provided an update on preparations for World Oceans Day (WOD) 2019 and 2020 informed members that 2019 World Oceans Day will be celebrated on 7 June around the theme “Gender and the Ocean”. Reference was also made to the meeting of the “Friends of World Oceans Day” (14 January) which highlighted that there was significant scope for coordination and collaboration among UN-Oceans members on this year’s theme, considering that many members have ongoing workstreams that relate to the role of gender in oceans. A brief overview of plans to mark World Oceans Day was also provided. UN-Oceans members were strongly encouraged to consider participating in the 2019 WOD event in New York as well as assisting with the identification and participation of “story tellers” for the event. Members were also encouraged to organize events throughout the world to help amplify and share this important message. In this regard, members were called upon to register and enter their activities on the official United Nations website for World Oceans Day at: www.unworldoceansday.org. DOALOS noted that discussions on the theme for the 2020 WOD were already under way in the Group of Friends of WOD. DOALOS also informed members that the Coordinator in DOALOS of WOD activities is Mr. Francois Baillet, Senior Legal Officer (baillet@un.org).

35. IOC of UNESCO delivered a presentation on the WOD portal it is co-managing with DOALOS.

36. ILO expressed his interest in contributing to the 2019 WOD. Attention was also called to the IMO World Maritime Day 2019 which will also focus on “Empowering Women in the Maritime Community” (26 September 2019). WMO confirmed that it will be organizing WOD at its headquarters.

37. **Action point and/or key message**

- World Oceans Day 2019 will be held in New York on Friday 7 June as declared by General Assembly resolution 63/111, paragraph 171.
- All UN-Oceans members are invited to celebrate WOD worldwide and to register their event(s) on the World Ocean Day Portal at: www.unworldoceansday.org.
- The “Friends of World Oceans Day” group which all UN-Oceans members are invited to participate in will continue discussing the theme for World Oceans Day 2020.

Possibilities for partnerships in capacity-building, for example in the context of the DOALOS’ Fellowship Programmes

38. DOALOS recalled that at previous meeting, DOALOS raised the possibility of greater collaboration amongst UN-Oceans members through capacity-building partnerships, particularly, in the context of the DOALOS’ Fellowship Programmes.

39. Upon the invitation from the Chair, and joining remotely from DOALOS, Ms. Valentina Germani, Legal Officer and Programme Advisor, explained that the UN-Nippon Fellowship Programme “Critical Needs Fellowship Programme” currently consists of a four-month training

programme at DOALOS with a highly customized programme of activities. During the four-month training programme, the Fellow may undertake a one month learning placement with either a Department of the United Nations Secretariat, a specialized agency, or an organization affiliated with the United Nations or other relevant organization. DOALOS proposed to invite UN-Oceans member organizations to volunteer in hosting a Fellow for one month. Information to that effect is being compiled and will be circulated to UN-Ocean members, with a request for feedback on potential areas of collaboration, including hosting arrangements for the Fellows.

40. UN-Oceans members reiterated the importance of capacity-building activities and suggested it would be important for UN-Oceans to avail itself of opportunities to highlight the breadth of the capacity-building activities members are undertaking. In that regard, reference was made to the presentation made during the 10th meeting of the ICP by the UN-Oceans Coordinator (June 2009) on : “Supporting implementation of ICP outcomes and recommendations: Capacity-Building Programmes of UN-Oceans members” (available at: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/10thmeetingpanel.htm).

50. UN-OHRLLS informed the meeting its intention to organize a capacity-building event for land locked developing States and to invite DOALOS to join in its organization. DOALOS welcomed this opportunity and suggested that the International Seabed Authority could also be a partner in the side event. UNCTAD also expressed interest in contributing to the proposed side event.

51. **Action point and/or key message**

- DOALOS will circulate an information/concept paper on its Fellowship Programmes and possible opportunities for collaboration to all UN-Oceans members.
- OHRLLS will communicate information on its capacity-building event in due course.
- UN-Oceans members will continue to discuss on how to highlight their capacity-building activities possibly in a consolidated manner.

Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection 50th anniversary

52. Upon invitation by the Chair, IMO introduced this agenda item and recalled briefly the history of GESAMP and its achievements which would be the focus of its 50th anniversary celebration. DOALOS and UNDP will co-host the 46th meeting of GESAMP in New York from 9 – 13 September 2019. Anniversary celebrations will take place at a one-day symposium on 10 September which is expected to comprise presentations and discussion panels with Q and A slots and possibly also an exhibition space where the history and achievements of GESAMP will be visually presented. The programme might include content on the history, achievements, vision of GESAMP as well as a possible emphasis on women in marine science (in particular young women). UN-Oceans members were invited to participate in and contribute to the 50th anniversary of GESAMP.

53. UN-Oceans members welcomed continued information on GESAMP’s 50th anniversary.

54. **Action point and/or key message**

- UN-Oceans members will continue to receive update on the 50th of GESAMP and were invited to participate in and contribute to the 50th anniversary of GESAMP.

Item 7. UN-Oceans Work Programme for 2019-2020

55. Upon invitation by the Chair, DOALOS introduced the UN-Oceans biennial programme in view of the deferment of the review by the General Assembly of the UN-Oceans terms of reference to its 73th session. DOALOS highlighted the updates and other additions that were reflected in the draft UN-Oceans Work Programme for 2019-2020 which had been previously circulated to UN-Oceans members. Attention was called on the inclusion of a reference to a possible United Nations high level conference to support the implementation of SDG14 to be held in Portugal in June 2020. A reference was also added to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of GESAMP on 10 September 2019, within the context of the 46th meeting of GESAMP (9 – 13 September 2019).

56. In the ensuing discussions, UN-Oceans members expressed the view that the reference to the UN-Atlas should be deleted from the UN-Oceans Work Programme noting that no updates had been made to the site since 2014. However, UN-Oceans members agreed that the Atlas still contains useful information.

57. DOALOS expressed its readiness to consult with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which hosts the Atlas on its website to assess if anything can be done about the Atlas and what are the implications of maintaining the site. Pending further decision on this issue, UN-Oceans members stated that they would welcome statistics on number of visitors to the site.

58. **Action point and/or key message**

- UN-Oceans agreed to delete the reference to the UN-Atlas from its Work Programme 2019-2020 and seek further clarifications from the FAO on considerations for maintaining the page on its website
- Pending developments relating to a conference to support the implementation of SDG14 in 2020, UN-Oceans adopted in a preliminary manner, the biennial 2019-2020 UN-Oceans Work Programme as amended (see Annex III).

**Item 8. UN-Oceans Inventory of member organizations' activities and mandates:
Identification of synergies and areas of collaboration**

59. Upon invitation by the Chair, DOALOS/OLA recalled that the development of the inventory is referred to in the annual General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea since the launch of the inventory in 2016. New members were encouraged to contribute to the inventory hosted on the UN-Oceans website by FAO. DOALOS also noted that as agreed at the Paris face-to-face meeting, DOALOS prepared a questionnaire on the use of the inventory for distribution to all Member States during the ICP meeting in 2018. However, no responses were received. DOALOS intends to continue distributing the questionnaire at the next ICP meeting, in June 2019.

59. DOALOS highlighted that the identification of synergies and areas of collaboration is an ongoing task where no progress seems to be made. In response, UN-Oceans members supported the proposal by IAEA to entrust an intern to carry out an analysis of the inventory of activities by member organizations with the view to identifying potential synergies and areas of collaboration.

60. **Action point and/or key message**

- DOALOS, in collaboration with FAO will provide the necessary information to new UN-Oceans members to facilitate inputs into the UN-Oceans inventory.
- DOALOS as well as other UN-Oceans members will investigate the possibility of assigning an intern to analyse the inventory entries for identification of possible areas of synergy and collaboration.
- DOALOS will continue to distribute the questionnaire on the inventory at ICP meetings.

Item 9. UN-Oceans website

61. Upon invitation by the Chair, DOALOS introduced this agenda item. Noting that an updated website is important as an outreach tool towards Member States and the public at large DOALOS recalled that a first set of updates as agreed upon by UN-Oceans was implemented by FAO prior to the convening of the Ocean Conference in June 2017. DOALOS noted that as informed by FAO, the UN-Oceans website did get a substantial increase of visits during that time.

62. DOALOS recalled that a document containing a second set of proposed updates was circulated to UN-Oceans members for further comments ahead of the March 2018 face-to-face meeting in Paris, France. In addition to the changes proposed in that document, members had emphasized the need to make the website more visually appealing, including by adding photos, and suggested that an electronic tool could be used to compile UN-Oceans events, e.g. similar to that used by the new FAO website, or through the development of an app.

63. DOALOS informed members that as indicated by FAO a number of circumstances did not allow for much progress on this item since the meeting in March 2018. FAO was still committed to do basic changes to the UN-Oceans website to implement the work they had already agreed upon. However, FAO conveyed that because of ongoing changes about their website, FAO was not able to implement any new “design” changes to the current UN-Oceans website which is now located on their “legacy” website. However, this could be considered migrating all content from the legacy website to the new corporate website platform.

64. In the discussions that ensued, UN-Oceans members highlighted that the website was an important and robust tool with useful information on UN-Oceans. In that regard, reference was made to the UN-Oceans meetings’ reports that are posted on the website. It was also recalled that the website is a tool to increase transparency on the UN-Oceans activities. UN-Oceans members therefore agreed that it was important for the website to be kept up-to-date as it represents the identity and image of UN-Oceans to the world.

65. In view of the constraints expressed by FAO, UN-Oceans members discussed possibilities to make the website less prone to constant updating and possibly establishing a task force to that end. Focusing on the most outdated tabs relating to “News” and “Events”, suggestions included deleting those tabs; developing an UN-Oceans newsletter that would include, for example, summaries of discussions at UN-Oceans side events; showcasing “News” on each member organization website; or using the DESA Ocean Action Newsletter to convey UN-Oceans news. It was also proposed that on the UN-Oceans website, all members could include a link to the “news” link on their website which is constantly updated. It was pointed out that for some members this would imply posting more than one links on news within their organization.

66. **Action point and/or key message**

- DOALOS will work with FAO on updates to the website including with a view to making it less in need of frequent updates.

Item 10. Exchange of information

67. DOALOS/OLA informed members that the Coordinator of the informal consultations on the General Assembly resolution on oceans and the law of the sea had formally circulated the informal document prepared by UN-Oceans to facilitate the review of the terms of reference by the General Assembly at its 73rd session. During the consultations Member States expressed their satisfaction with the work of UN-Oceans and the UN Legal Counsel/DOALOS as its Focal Point, while some also considered that the role of UN-Oceans could be enhanced. The review of the UN-Oceans TORs was ultimately deferred until the 75th session (resolution 73/124, para. 365).

68. DOALOS also provided information on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment including Socioeconomic Aspects, highlighting that UN-Oceans members were encouraged to provide through DOALOS recommendations for nomination of experts to the Pool of Experts for the second cycle of the Regular Process. Information was also provided on the United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally-binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ-IGC) and the 20th meeting of the ICP. In this regard, DOALOS noted that in due course, members will be requested to contribute to the UN-Oceans statement to be delivered at ICP by the United Nations Legal Counsel in his capacity as UN-Oceans focal point.

69. DOALOS took also the opportunity to thank UN-Oceans members for their contributions to the Secretary-General’s report on oceans and the law of the sea, focusing on the topic of focus of the ICP-20, “Ocean Science and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development”. An invitation to contribute to the second report regarding all other developments in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea within the scope of the activities of members’ organization will be sent in due course. DOALOS noted that in addition, the fourteenth round of Informal Consultations of States Parties to the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, to be held on 2 and 3 May 2019, will focus on the topic “Performance reviews of regional fisheries

management organizations and arrangements”. UN-Oceans members were invited to send their contribution to the report (deadline of 30 March) and to participate as observers in the meeting.

70. OHRLLS provided some information on the High-level review of the SAMOA Pathway, to be held as part of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly on 25 September 2019. OHRLLS informed UN-Oceans that the review would result in a concise declaration informed by the regional workshops that took place in 2018. The Co-Chairs for the consultations on the declaration are Fiji and Ireland.

71. DESA provided information on the possible Conference to support the implementation of SDG14 to be held in Lisboa, Portugal in 2020. DESA highlighted in response to some questions that the elements of a draft resolution at the time of the meeting were still being considered by the co-facilitators, Kenya and Portugal.

72. IAEA called attention to the “Our Ocean Conference” in Oslo, Norway (23-24 October 2019) the World Ocean Summit 2019 (UAE, Abu Dhabi, 5-7 March 2019) and the World Ocean Week to be held in China (2-8 November 2018), highlighting the ongoing momentum on oceans issues.

73. UNCTAD referred to the Second Oceans Trade Forum relating to aspects of SDG14 (16-18 July 2018) and provided information on three UNCTAD initiatives, including a project on fisheries and blue economy in collaboration with DOALOS and the Commonwealth Secretariat; the development of a sustainable transportation tool kit in the field of maritime transport; and a project on climate change adaptation for ports and coastal transport infrastructures in Small island Developing States (<https://SIDSport-ClimateAdapt.unctad.org>). UNCTAD highlighted in that regard that the project had produced some quantitative inputs into the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on Global Warming of 1.5 Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. UNCTAD also called attention to recent amendments to the European Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment, effective since May 2017 in 28 EU Member States, which include a new legal requirement for EIAs to take into account climate change.

74. UNEP referred to the Friends of Ocean Action and the next “Our Ocean Conference” which will be held in Palau, in 2020. UNEP also provided information on the convening of UNEA-4 in March 2019 and mentioned that one week before the UNEA, there would be a discussion on broad environmental governance including with reference to the blue economy, pollution, finance opportunities etc. UNEP also referred to the Ocean Action Agenda report published by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative; and celebrations of the World Environment Day (5 June). UNEP also provided information on the development of a UNEP strategy on oceans which when moving to the implementation phase could also provide for an area of collaboration within UN-Oceans.

75. IOC of UNESCO referred to a joint project between the Global Ocean Forum and the International Seabed Authority which will be focusing on capacity-building. IOC also informed members it will be hosting the EurOCEAN Conference 2019 (Paris, France, 11-12 June 2019), highlighting that it could provide an opportunity for collaboration with UN-Oceans members.

IOC of UNESCO also provided information on its launch with the European Commission of a new initiative on Marine Spatial Planning (a three-year project) with the view to, among other, strengthening and harmonizing approaches and providing a forum to share experiences. IOC of UNESCO explained that the MSP was a commitment at the Ocean Conference in 2017 with an area of focus beyond Europe.

76. UNFCCC informed members that Nationally Determined Contributions will be updated in 2020 with the first global stocktake in 2023. UNFCCC noted that “oceans” is gaining political recognition under the UNFCCC process since Paris COP 21 (where the Because the Ocean Declaration was signed), and with the Fiji presidency at COP 23 which initiated the Ocean Pathway Partnership. There is a need for more discussions, including to bring diverse communities together on oceans in anticipation of the UNFCCC COP25 in Chile. One opportunity to support Parties could be the preparation of supplementary technical guidelines on oceans and coastal zones for the process to prepare and implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) which may constitute a way forward in terms of facilitating adaptation in coastal zones.

77. IMO informed of the IMO Action plan to address marine plastic litter from ships, which had been adopted by MEPC 73, in October 2018. He also drew attention to upcoming IMO meetings of interest (London Convention /Protocol Scientific Groups in March and MEPC 74 in May), and the 46th session of GESAMP, which will be hosted in New York by UNDP and DOALOS, from 9-13 September, and coincides with GESAMP’s 50th anniversary. All UN-Oceans members were invited to attend. Finally it was noted that a new working group of GESAMP, addressing sea-based sources of marine litter, had just been established under the co-lead of FAO and IMO." IMO also informed UN-Oceans members of recent changes in the secretariat, including the new Director for the Marine Environment Division, Mr. Hiroyuki Yamada, who had replaced Mr. Stefan Micallef following his retirement in late 2018.

78. In addition to the above, Ms. Isabel Aranda, Programme Officer, Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General, provided information on the convening of the Secretary-General Climate Action Summit in New York, on 23 September 2019, its format, areas of focus and expected possible outcomes (<http://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>). The Summit will aim at mobilizing political will to raise real ambitions for the achievement of the Paris Agreement goals. Ms. Aranda noted that the preparatory work included many intergovernmental organizations and highlighted that oceans will feature in the Summit.

79. Ms. Aranda invited UN-Oceans to reflect on how it could support the Secretary-General’s initiative and called for ideas, in particular in the area of resilience and adaptation. She noted that the Summit would constitute a contribution towards 2020 and the review of NDCs. Mr. Taalas, Secretary-General of WMO and member of the Steering Committee on the Summit emphasized that the Summit is expected to provide a forum for Member States and Partners to offer and confirm fresh and new initiatives as effective action on climate change. UN-Oceans members highlighted some areas of activities under their organizations which could be linked or featured in the Summit.

Item 11. Wrap up and closure of the meeting

80. UN-Oceans members reviewed action points and/or key messages. Regarding other matters, DOALOS informed members of the request for membership to the UN-Oceans focal point from the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). UN-Oceans members expressed their support for the request.

81. In his closing remarks, the Chair expressed his willingness to promote UN-Oceans in the meetings of the Chief Executive Board (CEB). The next CEB meeting will focus on climate change. The Chair emphasized that it was important for UN-Oceans to prove its added value through concrete action on specific issues. He highlighted that the Decade provided such opportunity. He recalled also that as Chair of the panel on “Nature-Based Solutions” during the Climate Summit, UN-Oceans was welcome to make an input into the panel. The Chair confirmed that the WMO reform will focus more on oceans and cross cutting issues and will be favouring increased partnerships with other organizations.

82. On behalf of all UN-Oceans members, DOALOS/OLA also thanked Mr. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of WMO for chairing the meeting and the warm and generous hospitality offered by him and WMO. DOALOS also expressed thanks and appreciation for WMO colleagues for their collaboration in the organization and servicing of the meeting. DOALOS/OLA indicated that a report would be prepared and sent to UN-Oceans members for their review and approval once it had been cleared by the Chair.

83. The Chair thanked all participants and DOALOS/OLA for their contribution and closed the 19th meeting of UN-Oceans.
