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Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

Report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its twentieth meeting

Letter dated 20 June 2019 from the Co-Chairs of the Informal Consultative Process addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/124, we were appointed as the Co-Chairs of the twentieth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

We have the honour to submit to you the attached report on the work of the Informal Consultative Process at its twentieth meeting, which was held at United Nations Headquarters from 10 to 14 June 2019. The outcome of the meeting consists of our summary of issues and ideas raised during the meeting, in particular with regard to the topic of focus "Ocean science and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development".

In line with past practice, we kindly request that the present letter and the report be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 76 (a) of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Pennelope Althea **Beckles**
Isabelle F. **Picco**
Co-Chairs

* A/74/50.

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Twentieth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

(10–14 June 2019)

Co-Chairs' summary

Agenda items 1 and 2
Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Co-Chairs, Pennelope Althea Beckles, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, and Isabelle Picco, Permanent Representative of Monaco to the United Nations, appointed by María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, opened the meeting.

2. Opening remarks were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, João Miguel de Serpa Soares, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Liu Zhenmin, and the Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, on behalf of the Secretary-General.

3. Delegations adopted the format and annotated provisional agenda (A/AC.259/L.20) and approved the organization of work.

Agenda item 3
General exchange of views

4. A general exchange of views took place at the plenary meetings held on 10 and 13 June. Delegations expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on oceans and the law of the sea centred on the topic of focus (A/74/70), which was considered to be comprehensive and to provide a solid basis for discussions, and also expressed their support to the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea for, among other things, the opportunity that the meeting offered to develop substantive inputs in preparation for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

5. Delegations welcomed the proclamation of the Decade, which would commence on 1 January 2021, and considered the focus of the twentieth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process on ocean science and the Decade appropriate, timely and important. Appreciation was expressed to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for its work to date in preparation for the Decade. In addition to the present meeting, the holding in 2020 of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (the Ocean Conference) was seen as an important foundation for the Decade.

6. Support was expressed for the emerging themes of the Decade and its societal outcomes. Several delegations stressed that a key component of the Decade should be to achieve a healthy, productive and resilient ocean, as stated in the draft road map for the Decade, noting that an interdisciplinary and holistic approach was required that broke down silos and drew necessary linkages between research and policymaking processes. They noted that the objective was in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goals 14, 13 and 7, the Paris Agreement, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities

of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the forthcoming special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate.

7. Delegations affirmed the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, including marine scientific research, and for the sustainable development of the ocean and its resources. Several delegations suggested that increasing awareness of its provisions could advance ocean science. The need to avoid fragmentation of the concept of marine scientific research by distinguishing between pure research activities and applied research, or by exempting activities related to operational oceanography from the concept, was highlighted. The need to seek the consent of a coastal State to conduct marine scientific research under its jurisdiction was also highlighted. The Decade was identified by many delegations as a good opportunity to further support the implementation of the applicable provisions of the Convention, as well as the achievements of the Goals, in particular Goal 14.

8. Delegations noted the cross-cutting role of ocean science in the 2030 Agenda, highlighting that science-based management underpinned the achievement of the targets under Goal 14, and that achievement of those targets would support the achievement of the other Goals under the 2030 Agenda.

9. The dependence of humankind on the ocean and its resources was highlighted, in particular in the light of the ocean's role in ensuring a habitable climate and providing food security, with more than 3 billion people directly relying on oceans for their livelihoods, as well as its role as a source of energy and natural resources and for tourism.

10. Delegations stressed the importance of ocean science in addressing the unprecedented pressures on the ocean, including climate change and ocean acidification, pollution, in particular from microplastics, biodiversity loss and the impacts of land activities, such as mining, transport, agriculture and the development of coastal areas. Many delegations emphasized the need to address the cumulative effects of various stressors. The contribution that ocean science and long-term ocean observations had made to the making of several fundamental decisions of the United Nations and the development of environmental regulations and treaties was also highlighted.

11. Delegations highlighted the gaps in knowledge about the ocean and its resources, some noting, in particular, the scarcity of data on the deep-sea floor and the low level of accuracy of existing data, especially for areas beyond national jurisdiction. It was also highlighted that the Arctic Ocean and the Indian Ocean were the ocean basins about which the least was known. Several delegations expressed the view that a lack of scientific information should, however, not be used as an excuse to postpone conservation and management measures. The view was also expressed that the interlinkages between oceans and mountains had been overlooked, with mountain ranges significantly affecting hydrological cycles and glacial melting caused by climate change contributing to sea level rise.

12. Several delegations noted that a more comprehensive understanding of the oceans was indispensable to ensuring the sustainable management of oceans and their resources, including for the development of the blue economy. The importance of scientific observation for cartography, safe navigation, shipping, search and rescue, monitoring and predicting extreme weather events, disaster prevention and natural resource development, including for offshore oil and gas exploitation and sustainable fisheries, in particular artisanal fisheries, was highlighted. The role of underwater cultural heritage in providing information on past climates, among other things, was also emphasized, and the need for its protection was underscored. Greater knowledge

was also identified as critical for the development of mitigation measures in the context of climate change.

13. In terms of challenges, delegations noted that certain States, in particular developing States, had limited human and institutional capacity to conduct and benefit from ocean science and lacked the necessary infrastructure. The need to provide an opportunity for landlocked countries to participate in ocean science, including through capacity development, was also highlighted. Several delegations emphasized the need for commitments in the field of capacity-building.

14. The importance of ensuring the availability of reliable and accessible ocean data to support the sustainable management of oceans, as well as to promote cooperation, was underlined by delegations. The role of submarine cables in globalizing access to telecommunication networks and the socioeconomic benefits that they delivered were highlighted by an observer delegation. Several delegations highlighted obstacles related to data-sharing and the need for best practices for the management and exchange of data.

15. Several delegations noted the need for particular attention to be given to ensuring access to user-friendly data, to ensure that, among other things, developing countries are able to benefit from ocean science. It was highlighted that internationally accepted standards to support open access to and the interoperability of data, as well as the establishment of a clearing house mechanism, were potential initiatives being discussed in the context of the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond natural jurisdiction.

16. Many delegations also noted that the development of ocean science faced challenges stemming from limited funding and stressed the need for sustained investment in that respect.

17. Some delegations mentioned that the low number of women among ocean scientists was a particular challenge, calling for increased gender diversity in that discipline. The view was expressed that, while women's participation in ocean sciences was on average 10 percentage points higher than in scientific professions in general, the overall average rate of 38 per cent was still insufficient. In that regard, Member States, regional and international organizations, universities and research institutions were encouraged to increase efforts to empower women and girls and encourage women to study and pursue careers in ocean science.

18. Notwithstanding various challenges, many delegations highlighted the opportunities available to advance ocean science, including by developing technology, improving data availability and operability, supporting capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology and promoting ocean literacy, in particular for younger generations. Several delegations noted that their countries contributed to capacity-building projects and programmes.

19. Several delegations underscored the wealth of knowledge held by indigenous peoples and local communities. They underlined the important complementary role of traditional knowledge and the contribution that it could make to improving knowledge of the ocean and ocean governance, and highlighted the need for relevant traditional knowledge and traditional knowledge holders to be recognized and systematically included in scientific work as part of the steps taken in the context of the Decade.

20. Delegations highlighted how critical ocean science was for decision makers and emphasized the need to strengthen the science-policy interface. A delegation observed that the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the

Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, and the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment showed that policy decisions should be underpinned by the best available science. Many delegations highlighted that an improved understanding of the interconnectivity between the ocean and the climate was essential to furthering climate policy. In that respect, several delegations emphasized the links between ocean science and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Delegations also noted that ocean science featured prominently in several policy processes, including the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. Several delegations pointed out that a science-based approach should be one of the core principles of the future instrument. The role of ocean science in the development of regulations on exploitation, pursuant to part XI of the Convention, to govern activities in the Area, which were scheduled to be finalized in 2020, was also noted. A delegation stressed that, in the absence of reliable data and the corresponding scientific uncertainty, the precautionary principle must be applied.

21. Delegations highlighted the critical importance of international cooperation and the need for increased collaboration and coordination in the field of ocean science, including at the national, regional and global levels and through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, as well as through engagement with various stakeholders. Several delegations gave an overview of their current international partnerships with other States and of the frameworks for such cooperation. In that regard, a delegation drew attention to the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, which was to deliver its final report in 2020, as an authoritative ocean policy body that could trigger and facilitate actions taken in favour of ocean protection and productivity. Several delegations expressed the view that a review of the terms of reference of UN-Oceans could be undertaken with the purpose of strengthening that mechanism so that it might realize its full potential, including in relation to ocean science.

22. The Decade was considered an important opportunity to focus attention in order to address gaps in ocean science, increase knowledge, improve synergies and support the sustainable conservation and management of marine resources (see also paras. 7 and 19). Many delegations suggested that the Decade could be used to foster a better understanding of the ocean-climate nexus. A delegation also suggested that the actions taken in the context of the Decade could enhance knowledge of areas beyond national jurisdiction. Several delegations expressed the view that a priority of the Decade should be the assessment of capacity and technology needs at all levels, in particular for small island developing States. It was suggested that the Decade and the Ocean Conference to be held in 2020 could help to mainstream ocean science and increase awareness of it. It was also hoped that actions taken in the context of the Decade would catalyse greater investment in ocean science and lead to better coordination between existing institutions and processes. The view was expressed, however, that a decade might not be enough time to achieve all of the goals that States had set for themselves.

23. Several delegations gave an overview of their current research programmes and activities in the field of ocean science, including in relation to ocean observation, data collection and forecasting, resource monitoring, assessment and tracking, technology development, conservation, ocean literacy, management of blue forests and the involvement of local coastal communities in reducing poverty. Some delegations also noted outreach efforts undertaken nationally with constituents, experts, universities and professional societies to promote the Decade and receive input. Other delegations informed participants of the establishment of national inter-agency committees or offices in support of the Decade.

Topic of focus: ocean science and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

24. In accordance with the format and annotated provisional agenda, the discussion panel on the topic of focus was organized in two segments structured around the scope and uses of, and gaps in, ocean science and international cooperation and coordination in advancing ocean science and addressing related gaps. The panellists gave presentations, after which discussions were held.

1. Scope and uses of, and gaps in, ocean science

Panel presentations

25. In the first segment, the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Vladimir Ryabinin, introduced the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development as a key opportunity to address important links between ocean health and sustainable development. The Director of the Saint Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Professor of Tropical Island Ecology at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, John Agard, provided an overview of the status of ocean science in advancing sustainable development, pointing out the interconnectivity of the Sustainable Development Goals and highlighting research priorities. The medical delegate to the Monaco Scientific Centre, Hervé Raps, addressed the links between ocean health and human health, highlighting ongoing research on pathogens and changes in the oceans that affected ocean and human life. The Director of the Institute of Marine Sciences and Limnology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Elva Escobar-Briones, provided information on deep-sea biological processes, relevant environmental, economic and social aspects and current gaps in knowledge. The Director of Scientific Programmes and Chief Science Adviser of the National Marine Fisheries Service at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America, Francisco Werner, provided an overview of ocean science in support of sustainable fisheries. The Principal Ecologist and Advice and Assessment Group Manager at the Marine Climate Change Centre of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science laboratory in Lowestoft, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Silvana Birchenough, gave a presentation on the current state of knowledge on benthic changes resulting from climate change and ocean acidification, including its effects on commercial species and potential future consequences for aquatic ecosystems worldwide. The Director General of the Institute for Marine and Coastal Research of Colombia, Francisco Arias-Isaza, discussed the application of science to ocean management and emphasized the importance of social sciences and traditional knowledge in addition to natural sciences. The leader of the PricewaterhouseCoopers project entitled “Economy of the sea”, Miguel Marques, provided information on how ocean science could be applied in support of blue growth and the blue economy, noting that an integrated approach identifying mutual gains for stakeholders was essential. Martin Visbeck of the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research in Kiel, Germany, explained how enhancing the free exchange of data concerning ocean observations, capacity-building and research could inform management decisions regarding the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans. The Chair of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, Peter Kershaw, presented the institutional structure and work of the Group in advising United Nations agencies with responsibilities relating to the marine environment. A member of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process, Karen Evans, described, in a pre-recorded presentation, the work and findings of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment and presented some of the possible links between the Regular Process and the Decade. The Vice-Chair of the European Marine Board, Carlos

Garcia-Soto, presented the findings of the report entitled “Navigating the Future V” concerning marine science for a sustainable future as an example of a scientific publication written in a format accessible to policymakers.

Panel discussions

26. The discussions held after the presentations focused, inter alia, on the role and uses of ocean science in better understanding, predicting and addressing the impacts of climate change and other pressures on ocean ecosystems and food safety and security, how data and information could be better shared and how the gap between science and policymaking could be bridged. Discussions were also held on ocean literacy and education, as well as funding for ocean science. Ways for those aspects to be addressed during the Decade were also touched upon.

27. A delegation observed that there was much about the ocean that was still unknown, noting that ocean science seemed to constantly lag behind changes and developments in the ocean, and queried what could be done to better anticipate and respond to emerging challenges. Mr. Marques remarked that ocean science would likely always lag behind, but that the scientific community would adapt accordingly as needs changed. An observer delegation underlined that it was essential for decision-making processes to be underpinned by the precautionary principle and that failure to do so could have adverse impacts on the marine environment. Mr. Marques affirmed the importance of the precautionary principle and observed that the uses of the oceans were increasing in number and intensity, noting that environmental protection should be seen as a value rather than a cost.

28. Addressing the impacts of ocean noise produced by certain tools and methods used in ocean science, such as seismic surveying, an observer delegation stressed that technology should be improved to reduce adverse impacts on marine life. Mr. Visbeck agreed that ocean noise was a pollutant and indicated that the scientific community had recognized that challenge and sought to avoid gathering data using tools and methods that had an impact on marine life. He noted that there were further opportunities to reduce noise pollution.

29. Considering the impacts of ocean acidification and marine heat waves on potential aquaculture zones, a question was raised concerning the means available to maintain sufficient seafood production in order to ensure food security. In response, Ms. Birchenough highlighted the monitoring of temperature and carbonate chemistry as an important means not only to increase understanding of the underlying processes and impacts, but also to predict changes and events that might require certain preventive actions at aquaculture facilities, such as temporarily moving sensitive life cycle stages to less affected areas or buffering the water. Noting that more research was needed, Mr. Werner added that, in the context of changes in species distribution caused by increases in temperatures, harvesting species new to an area or decreasing the fishing pressure on other species might be considered. He also stressed the need for improvements in the two- to three-year forecasting cycle, which he noted was of special interest for commercial as well as human health-related activities. Ms. Escobar-Briones suggested including climate change as a factor when developing numerical models for aquaculture farms, as well as conservation areas for natural populations. She also underscored the importance of including populations that provided a source of food for species of commercial interest of a higher trophic level in the models and forecasting.

30. With regard to the potentially serious impacts of localized decreases in pH values on calcareous microorganisms at the base of the food web and the implications for food security at the regional or subregional levels, Mr. Werner noted that, while the importance of the lower part of the food web had long been understood, new

molecular biology approaches were helping in the difficult task of quantifying changes in communities at the base of the food chain that had occurred over the past 40 to 50 years in response to changes in environmental or other conditions, but that more research needed to be done. He added that there was evidence that changes at the base of the food web had an impact on higher trophic levels as well. Several delegations underscored the importance of taking the entirety of the food web into account in order to enable a successful ecosystem-based management approach and the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources, and pointed to the forthcoming special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate as a potential source of further information in that context.

31. A delegation, noting that the topic of sea level rise in relation to international law had recently been added to the work programme of the International Law Commission, asked whether there were any non-legal aspects of the issue that could be addressed during the Decade. With reference to deep-sea biological processes, Ms. Escobar-Briones highlighted the need to take into account environmental, social and economic aspects, considering that a number of ecosystem services and potential losses due to deep-sea activities or climate change had yet to be evaluated, which was a prerequisite for assessing whether the benefits of planned activities would truly outweigh potential losses.

32. In response to a question on whether the issue of the resilience of Caribbean countries to hurricanes would be taken into consideration during the Decade, Ms. Birchenough drew attention to a project implemented in that region in cooperation with the World Bank, which included parametric insurance as a means of compensation for local fishing communities in order to remedy, for example, the loss of gear or the loss of sea time due to extreme weather events.

33. Responding to a question on the effects on human health of plastic microcontaminants contained in fish used for human consumption, Mr. Raps referred to studies from the Faroe Islands demonstrating a link between the high mercury content in whale meat and blubber and delays in the neurodevelopment of children whose mothers had consumed whale meat, leading to recommendations that pregnant women should avoid the consumption of certain parts of whales. He noted that questions were being raised about whether to also recommend avoiding consumption of smaller fish and shellfish during pregnancy because of plastic contamination. Ms. Birchenough added that studies were currently being conducted to examine the absorption of microplastics, especially in certain filter-feeding species in the Caribbean, but that the results had yet to be published. Several delegations voiced their concern with respect to the potential effects of microplastics on human health in general, noting the wide distribution of such contaminants, not only in seafood, but also in drinking water, and the gaps in knowledge in that regard, and suggested that more research on the topic might be carried out in the context of the Decade. Mr. Raps added that other types of pathogens, such as bacteria, might attach themselves to microplastics and constitute additional contaminants and risks to human health. He also pointed to a study currently conducted by the World Health Organization on plastic particules in drinking water.

34. A delegation noted the detrimental effects of invasive *Sargassum* seaweed on ecosystems in the Caribbean and enquired about ways to deal with the issue. Mr. Agard suggested reframing the issue as an opportunity and pointed to a number of proposals for alternative uses of *Sargassum*, including converting it into fertilizer and using it to create biodegradable plastics, underscoring the circular aspect of the blue economy. Ms. Birchenough noted that, while several possible solutions were already being discussed, including its use as biofuel or fertilizer, funding was required for the implementation of such solutions. She cautioned that, owing to the presence

of heavy metals, certain uses of *Sargassum* would need to involve treatment. Ms. Escobar-Briones pointed to habitat losses caused by *Sargassum* and encouraged the use of funds of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation reserved for that purpose. She stressed the need for further experimental studies, baseline analyses and additional data, in particular from remote sensing with a sufficient resolution and better coverage. She cautioned against burning *Sargassum* as fuel owing to the additional release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere that it would cause, and she stressed the need for further cooperation in the wider Caribbean region.

35. A delegation welcomed the example of Colombia, recounted by Mr. Arias-Isaza, as to how, on the basis of research, the activities and interests of various fishery stakeholders were able to be accommodated, and it underlined that it was essential to involve social and behavioural scientists as well as economists to ensure the success of actions undertaken in the context of the Decade.

36. Noting that the enhancement of data-sharing was being discussed in the context of the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, some delegations enquired about the key issues to be resolved to promote data-sharing, with a delegation noting that data were considered a possible benefit to be shared in the context of those discussions. A delegation observed that, while there were several data platforms, issues of interoperability and connectivity needed to be addressed. Mr. Visbeck noted that the amount of available data and information was growing and that data-sharing was essential, but there was as yet no global database. However, the international community was working to fill the gap.

37. With reference to the question raised by Mr. Visbeck concerning the legal framework for operational oceanography, a delegation noted that such legal questions had been settled by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission with regard to Argo floats, which provided freely available data on oceanographic phenomena to the global scientific community. The delegation also recalled that the inclusion of new sensors on Argo floats had recently been approved. Further noting that the capacity to retrieve and use data from the Argo floats needed to be enhanced, the delegation, along with Mr. Visbeck, suggested that States with the capability to do so could assist others in building the required capacity, including by sharing tools and information. Mr. Visbeck observed that, while most scientists supported and promoted free and open access to data, data collected by private companies were often subject to permanent non-disclosure agreements. He suggested that there should be time limits to such agreements, observing that some non-disclosure agreements expired after 10 years. Mr. Arias-Isaza suggested that stakeholders whose profits were generated through ocean-related activities should share information gathered in the course of those activities. He stated that the Decade could be the vector for shared responsibility, so that ocean information could be shared for the benefit of all humankind.

38. With regard to the use of ocean science in policy and management and in relation to how the gap could be bridged between scientists, policymakers and the public, Mr. Visbeck noted that the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment was the only global undertaking aimed at providing a regular scientific assessment of the state of the marine environment, including its socioeconomic aspects, in order to enhance the scientific basis for policymaking. A delegation observed that the Regular Process had not garnered much attention, which could be partly a result of the lack of media visibility.

39. A delegation noted that political action was required to ensure that ocean science was integrated into decision-making. Delegations also stressed the importance of

presenting knowledge in a manner that would allow decision makers to properly understand and, therefore, properly address the issues at stake. Mr. Arias-Isaza noted a confidence gap, whereby political groups might ignore or alter scientific information thought to be against their interests. He noted that the issue needed to be overcome in order to build confidence among the various stakeholders. Moreover, scientists had to learn to communicate their results, and policymakers had to ask the right questions and trust the science. Mr. Kershaw noted that, in order for ocean science to be useful, the end-users needed to be involved from the beginning, so as to make sure that the expected outputs responded to their needs. Mr. Visbeck observed that, when research was funded by Governments, it was driven by stakeholders. Mr. Garcia-Soto referred to the use of science for sustainable development as another possible option, noting that such an approach had been created to solve issues of relevance to States and was therefore of value. Mr. Ryabinin noted that newly developed mechanisms for measuring and reporting on developments in ocean science capacity had the potential to attract the attention of Governments. Mr. Marques considered communication barriers as the biggest obstacle to progress, noting that the various languages used in business and in science, as well as the various backgrounds of people working in those fields, contributed to the barriers. In his view, it was necessary to identify mutual gains in order to move forward. Mr. Visbeck observed that, in order to move away from the current way of thinking, it would be important to ensure that scientific information was recognized as a public good.

40. Mr. Arias-Isaza stressed the need to ensure that scientific information produced by various processes was delivered not only to a wide range of ocean users, but also to those beyond the ocean community. He also noted gaps in reaching and actively involving young people, suggesting that specific curricula could be designed for schools on matters pertaining to ocean science and its importance for all.

41. Mr. Marques stressed the need for ocean science to have short-term goals that were clear to the public. While noting that government administrations often changed every few years, a delegation suggested that a long-term media campaign be established as part of the Decade to raise people's awareness adequately, starting with primary schools. The possibility of also conducting awareness-raising campaigns in the margins of major international events, such as the world cups organized by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, was also mentioned. Mr. Kershaw cited the need to make educational materials available and to promote citizen science. He further stressed the need for behavioural scientists to foster effective communication.

42. In relation to ways of encouraging the next generation to pursue careers in ocean science, Mr. Ryabinin noted a change of paradigm with respect to the interest in ocean science, which was expected to be further supported and coordinated by actions surrounding the Decade.

43. Noting the ongoing need to improve ocean literacy among stakeholders and communities, Mr. Visbeck cited UN-Oceans as one of the main mechanisms that could play a major role in ocean literacy during the Decade. Mr. Ryabinin also underscored the importance of developing ocean literacy and creating a sense of ownership of the ocean, and highlighted existing initiatives in that regard, including the Ocean Teacher Global Academy of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

44. Mr. Visbeck emphasized the importance of working together in the United Nations system and across the sciences to make sound decisions. A delegation enquired about the potential for drawing upon the work of existing regional bodies or organizations dealing with subject matters, such as the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization, to help to

describe the scientific objectives of the Decade. In that context, Mr. Werner encouraged building on the existing capability and experience of such organizations. Ms. Birchenough further emphasized the need for collaboration in order for the implementation plan for the Decade to benefit from the existing infrastructure and scientific expertise.

45. With regard to investments in ocean science, Mr. Agard highlighted the importance for industry to invest in further research. Addressing a question on how the difficulties experienced with carbon trading permits could be avoided in the case of blue bonds, Mr. Agard noted that, to progress with a blue and circular economy, financing needed to be put in place, and that blue bonds, which were currently being evaluated, were only part of a menu of potential financial instruments that could be used.

2. International cooperation and coordination in advancing ocean science and addressing related gaps

Panel presentations

46. In the second segment, the first three speakers discussed approaches and initiatives to address capacity-building needs in ocean science in Trinidad and Tobago, the Pacific and Sri Lanka, respectively. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Natural History Museum, United Kingdom, and co-founder and Director of SpeSeas, Trinidad and Tobago, Diva Amon, highlighted initiatives of SpeSeas to engage local communities in marine science; the Manager for Ocean Affairs of the Pacific Community, Jens Kruger, described the principal regional organizations, frameworks and strategies relevant to ocean science in the Pacific and provided examples of projects in the region; and the Director General of the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency of Sri Lanka, Wijemuni Nipuma Mahin Zoysa, addressed national challenges and approaches to capacity-building. The Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Chair of the Group of Experts on Capacity Development and member of the Naval Hydrography Service of Argentina, Ariel Troisi, discussed capacity development and the transfer of marine technology as cross-cutting issues of the Decade, highlighting the importance of surveying capacity development needs and matching them with capabilities. The Research Director of the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research, Karin Kroon Boxaspen, provided an overview of the recommendations of the Science for Ocean Action Conference, held in Bergen, Norway, from 19 to 21 November 2018, and the inputs that it had generated for the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. Toshio Suga, professor in the Department of Geophysics at the Graduate School of Science of Tohoku University, Japan, presented some of the current and emerging technology in ocean science, in particular the Global Ocean Observing System and Argo, emphasizing their importance and the need to provide an enabling environment through international cooperation. Frida Maria Armas-Pfirter, Professor of International Law at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, described the legal framework for ocean science, noting that it was centred around the Convention on the Law of the Sea and that all other applicable legal instruments must be consistent with it. The Chair of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Programme Director of the Institute of Marine Research, Norway, Peter Haugan, highlighted the importance of international cooperation for ocean science and described a number of activities undertaken by the Commission in cooperation with other international organizations and bodies in that regard. The Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, Michael Lodge, addressed cooperation in deep-sea science, describing the contributions made by the Authority and how the Decade could contribute to addressing various challenges. The Section Head of the Radioecology Laboratory of the Environment Laboratories of the International Atomic Energy

Agency, Peter Swarzenski, provided an overview of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network, noting that it provided a hub for global scientific cooperation in the field of ocean acidification. The Co-Chief Investment Officer and Co-Chair of Bridgewater Associates and co-founder of OceanX, Ray Dalio, spoke about the importance of taking a collaborative approach to ocean exploration and science, describing the contribution of OceanX in bringing together oceanographic institutions, global media companies and major philanthropic organizations. The Chief Executive Officer and marine biologist at the Alligator Head Foundation, Jamaica, Dayne Buddo, addressed the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in supporting ocean science, highlighting citizen science and ocean literacy projects. The Director of the Millennium Nucleus Centre of Ecology and Sustainable Management of Oceanic Islands at the Universidad Católica del Norte, Chile, Carlos F. Gaymer, presented the benefits of integrating traditional knowledge into ocean science, providing examples from the Pacific islands, including Easter Island. The Co-Chair of the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange programme of the All-Russian Research Institute of Hydrometeorological Information at Obninsk, Russian Federation, Sergey Belov, provided an overview of international cooperation in data management under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, including the data and information management strategy of the Commission, the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange programme and the future data and information system of the Commission. The President of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, Tarmo Soomere, provided an overview of the science-policy interface at the national level, with a focus on Estonia, noting the importance of strong input at the national level for decision-making in interregional and subcontinental organizations. The Executive Secretary of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, Monika Stankiewicz, gave a presentation on the regional science-policy interface, with a focus on the Commission and its work in the Baltic marine environment. The Co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process, Juliette Babb-Riley discussed avenues for strengthening the global science-policy interface, highlighting the role of current sectoral and thematic scientific assessments and, in particular, the integrated assessment under the Regular Process.

Panel discussions

47. The discussions held after the presentations focused on international cooperation and coordination in advancing ocean science, inter alia by addressing related capacity-building needs, including in the context of the Decade and other collaborative endeavours. The Convention on the Law of the Seas, as the legal framework applicable also to ocean science, data use, standardization and management, the integration of traditional knowledge in ocean science, the role of NGOs and the strengthening of the science-policy interface at all levels were also discussed.

48. A delegation asked whether capacity development should be focused on enhancing science capabilities or whether there should be a closer link with the socioeconomic applications of science. In particular, clarification was sought regarding the most useful approach to capacity development. Mr. Kruger suggested that capacity-building activities carried out in the context of the Decade should transform the way in which natural scientists, social scientists and politicians communicated with each other. Mr. Troisi agreed, highlighting the need to bridge the gap between scientific disciplines and between ocean scientists and policymakers, decision makers, managers and social scientists. He also noted that one size did not fit all in capacity development and that the different requirements of individual regions should be taken into account across individual regions, Member States and topics. Ms. Amon agreed that generalization should be avoided but added that certain

common issues stood out for the Caribbean, such as improving governance, building financial resources and creating regional collaboration.

49. Raising the issue of so-called “parachute science”, in which research was conducted under externally funded programmes without leaving research samples to or sharing data and results with the coastal States concerned, a delegation noted that changes in its national approach to the funding of research had raised the level of engagement of local partners in research, and it enquired about the experience of panellists in that regard. Several panellists pointed to positive experiences of cooperation between marine scientists and local stakeholders, including under the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries-Nansen project. Mr. Kruger noted an improvement in the types of partnerships being forged between researchers and local stakeholders in the Pacific but suggested that more could be done with respect to the retention of research samples in the region and the involvement of local scientists in the analysis of samples and publication of research results. Ms. Amon noted that further improvements were also required in the Caribbean context. Ms. Boxaspen highlighted the role that bilateral agreements and national regulations could play in that regard.

50. A delegation queried the extent to which the experiences of the panellists were focused on areas within national jurisdiction or whether they could also be applied in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and whether capacity-building in the latter areas would enhance capacity in the former. Mr. Troisi and Ms. Amon confirmed that the same experience and expertise could be applied irrespective of jurisdiction and that capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology in relation to one type of areas could enhance the research capabilities and expertise of countries in the other type. Mr. Kruger indicated that the main challenge regarding capacity-building in the Pacific was the shortage of expertise and the time required to train scientists.

51. A delegation sought further information on the systematic approach to maritime boundary delimitation in the Pacific. In response, Mr. Kruger confirmed the progress made with respect to maritime boundaries but noted that more support from partners was needed with regard to work in the Pacific concerning the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles. A delegation acknowledged the need for sufficient scientific and technical expertise regarding such matters and noted that regional collaboration could strengthen national capacity.

52. With regard to preparations for the Decade, a delegation enquired about the panellists’ experiences with developing capacity-building models that were responsive to changes in needs and demands over time. Mr. Troisi observed that the strategy to be developed for capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology in the context of the Decade would be designed for the long term, but that its implementation plan and regular reviews would be key to ensuring that it brought about the desired effects.

53. Noting that, while data-sharing and open access to data were essential, many countries lacked the capacity to analyse the data and translate them into information and knowledge, a delegation queried whether an objective under the Decade could be to make software, including standard open-source software, freely available and accessible for ocean data exploration and modelling. Mr. Troisi agreed that there was a need to develop capacity in data analysis in order to generate products for policymakers and sought the support of partners to work with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in integrating the proposal into the context of the Decade. Mr. Kruger acknowledged the role of open-source modelling tools but emphasized that such tools should be needs-driven and that their usefulness had to be evaluated in the light of local circumstances. For example, he explained that existing storm surge models could not inform early warning systems regarding marine

flooding in the Pacific, since coastal inundation in the Pacific was in fact caused by waves breaking on the reef.

54. It was also highlighted that inclusivity and knowledge transfer within the marine scientific community could be enhanced, including by improving gender balance and furthering education. A delegation emphasized the importance of engaging young people in the Decade.

55. A delegation asked whether there was a conflict between population growth and the corresponding need for more food from the ocean, on the one hand, and the sustainable management of fisheries, on the other. Ms. Boxaspen noted the need to ensure that such resources were produced and harvested in a sustainable manner and based on an integrated ecosystem assessment. With regard to aquaculture, she added that food could not be produced without a footprint, but that the footprint should be made as small as possible.

56. With regard to the legal framework, delegations reiterated that the Convention on the Law of the Sea also provided the legal framework for ocean science activities. Mr. Suga indicated that, in some cases, its provisions needed to be interpreted in the light of new technological developments and new requirements, while Ms. Armas-Pfirter underlined that such an interpretation should not result in a fragmentation of the way in which the Convention was applied and that the practice and decisions of various bodies in the field of ocean science should be consistent with it. She also pointed out the importance of respecting the rights of coastal States under the Convention. She further noted that law and science needed to work together to address challenges. In that regard, a delegation referred to the General Assembly and its primary role in discussing developments in ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including ocean science.

57. In response to questions on how the legal framework for ocean science under the Convention would relate to an international legally binding instrument, also under the Convention, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, Ms. Armas-Pfirter noted that, although she could not provide a conclusive reply while negotiations were ongoing, it appeared that delegations envisioned that the outcome would be consistent with the provisions of the Convention, including in relation to ocean science. A delegation noted that the Convention was the legal framework underpinning the negotiations for such an instrument, and that its provisions on marine scientific research were the basis for related discussions of the intergovernmental conference.

58. A delegation suggested that the coordination of the Global Ocean Observing System, through existing mechanisms and legal frameworks, provided a good model for actions to be taken in the context of the Decade. Several delegations welcomed the incorporation by the System of a broader range of ocean observations, which were considered necessary for integrated ocean management to address multiple stressors and cumulative impacts.

59. In response to a question about how temperature data collected by the System and Argo could be used to explain possible marine living resource migrations in the Indian Ocean resulting from ocean warming, Mr. Suga explained that, although an answer could not be provided on the basis of temperature data alone, the collection and integration of comprehensive multidisciplinary data from various sources could provide a better scientific understanding for improved decision-making. Responding to a question regarding the use, standardization and management of data, Mr. Suga noted that the importance of data management had taken into account in the Argo project from the outset, with the goal of making its data useful over the long term. That approach had resulted in data that were accessible and compatible for different uses, operational agencies and scientists. He noted the importance of cooperation with

various potential end-users and stakeholders, including through forums such as the ocean observing conference OceanObs'19.

60. A delegation highlighted the importance of the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in cooperation with other entities as fundamental for achieving the goals set under the Decade and drew attention to an example of international cooperation in the Atlantic that could be used as a model, including to bring together ocean and atmospheric science. Mr. Haugan cited an example of cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization based on multidisciplinary and regional ocean observation data, which were useful to meteorologists, while also noting that they should be connected to global programmes.

61. In response to a question on how the future database of the International Seabed Authority would interact with existing databases, Mr. Lodge explained that while the Authority's data were specialized, they could contribute to a broader understanding of the ocean, and therefore linking such data with other data was essential. He noted that the Authority was in advanced discussions with other bodies in that regard, citing as an example the fact that the database was set to become a node in the Ocean Biogeographic Information System. A delegation enquired as to whether the Authority's database would be comprehensive or simply focused on mineral resources. Mr. Lodge noted that it would contain data that had been collected over more than 30 years of deep-sea exploration with a focus on deep-sea minerals and mineral resources. However, he also explained that, while the database contained resource-specific data, it also contained an even larger amount of environmental data collected in accordance with the Authority's guidelines and recommendations. Another delegation remarked that the database would be very useful in the context of an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. An observer delegation queried whether, in line with the precautionary approach, enough was known about the impact of exploitation of deep-sea resources in the absence of environmental impact assessments and directed research.

62. Addressing questions related to whether OceanX was open to working with institutions around the world, whether the data that it collected was openly available and whether it was considering capacity-building for developing countries, Mr. Dalio explained that OceanX generally supported scientific exploration that was attractive to the media, in order to create the double impact of good science and media attention. He clarified that the scientific institutions supported by OceanX owned the data that they gathered, but that such data were usually shared with host countries. He added that his organization had provided contributions to a number of developing countries, including by financially supporting local NGOs and by researching and publicizing the specific coastal and underwater features of such countries. A delegation suggested that pilot projects with direct applicability, for example on ocean thermal energy conversion, low temperature thermal desalination and sustainable fishery techniques, such as cage cultures and coast aquaculture, would appeal to the public at large and raise interest in ocean science. Several delegations highlighted the importance of mobilizing a broader range of resources, including philanthropic resources, in the implementation of the goals under the Decade. Mr. Lodge agreed and stressed the importance of international cooperation given that no single Government could fund the necessary research.

63. In response to a question concerning the important issues that initiatives launched in the context of the Decade should address, including with regard to defining what sustainability really meant in the ecological context, Mr. Dalio noted that one aspect of sustainability that had not been given enough attention was financial sustainability, a critical requirement for research, and added that raising public support was an important way of ensuring such sustainability. Mr. Swarzenski

noted that, while it was known that the ocean played an important role in sequestering carbon dioxide, how changing conditions altered its capacity to do so was still unknown. In particular, he pointed to the role of microbes in the midwater column as an area in the carbon cycle that required more research.

64. In response to a question on practices of integrating ocean science into school curricula, Mr. Buddo noted that his organization implemented field study programmes for students of between 15 and 16 years of age, and that those programmes received good responses from teachers and financial support from school budgets for field activities. Mr. Gaymer noted that the educational managed marine area initiative, started in the Marquesas islands in French Polynesia, was a successful example of preparing future generations for the management and conservation of the oceans by integrating ocean science into the formal education curriculum. Under the initiative, every island in the Marquesas had one such area that was run by children between 7 and 11 years of age, who would study biology, mathematics, languages and other subjects in the field rather than in a classroom. He also noted that such areas had been designated in many other places, including in Easter Island, Chile.

65. A delegation enquired about challenges facing the sustainability of community-based programmes. Mr. Buddo noted that such programmes faced funding challenges because of the longer periods needed before a return on environmental investments could be seen, but that they also provided opportunities to involve all stakeholders in the conservation of the oceans, through either appeals to donors or projects such as the Adopt-A-Coral project of his organization. Mr. Gaymer highlighted the importance of sharing successful experiences in that regard through international collaboration, including through cooperation among Governments and through experience-sharing networks, such as Big Ocean.

66. With respect to the integration of traditional knowledge into ocean science, delegations expressed the view that traditional knowledge of natural phenomena was a very useful adjunct to knowledge gained through modern academic science, and that using them together could sometimes be highly synergistic. Mr. Gaymer pointed out that traditional knowledge was not only important in terms of gathering information from local communities, but that scientists should also learn to validate such information, develop scientific questions based on it and bring science back to local communities, including by incorporating them in research planning and by publishing papers through citizen science projects. Mr. Soomere noted that traditional knowledge, which had allowed communities to survive for many centuries with limited resources, had been heavily underestimated but could provide valuable insights for future development.

67. Delegations expressed the view that the science-policy interface should be a two-way process through which scientists and policymakers could listen to each other and be able to understand each other’s needs. Several delegations stressed the importance for policymakers to apply the precautionary principle in the face of incomplete scientific knowledge and to use environmental impact assessments as a tool to identify gaps in scientific knowledge.

68. In response to a question on the practice in Estonia of providing scientists with systematic training on how to communicate with policymakers, Mr. Soomere provided further information on training exercises in Estonia for scientists to develop their skills in communicating with policymakers, including a nationwide competition designed to encourage young scientists to present their research to a wide audience that included policymakers and meetings that brought together former politicians and scientists. He emphasized, in that regard, the importance of ensuring that the scientific evidence and advice remained undistorted until the decision-making stage.

Agenda item 4
Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

69. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel made two statements in his capacity as Focal Point of UN-Oceans. In the first statement, he provided information on the activities of UN-Oceans since the nineteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, including in relation to the topic of focus. It was noted that, since then, two new members had joined UN-Oceans, namely the secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

70. The Focal Point emphasized the support of UN-Oceans for the topic of focus of the Informal Consultative Process. In that regard, he noted that, at its nineteenth meeting, hosted by the World Meteorological Organization, in Geneva, from 7 to 8 February 2019, UN-Oceans had established a contact group to facilitate inputs and guidance for the preparatory phase of the Decade. With regard to its mandate in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including Goal 14, the Focal Point informed the participants of the side events that had been organized during major intergovernmental meetings to implement the UN-Oceans voluntary commitment registered at the Ocean Conference held in 2017 to raise awareness of relevant regulatory and policy frameworks and the activities of its members in support of Goal 14. In addition, he drew attention to the inventory of mandates and activities of UN-Oceans members, which was available on the UN-Oceans website.[1] He also noted the role of many members of UN-Oceans as co-leaders of Communities of Ocean Action, which had been established to galvanize action on the voluntary commitments registered at the Ocean Conference held in 2017.

71. The Focal Point drew attention to the UN-Oceans biennial work programme for the period 2019–2020, highlighting the following new items: contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, to be held on 10 September 2019, the high-level summit on climate action, to be held on 23 September 2019, the high-level review of the Samoa Pathway, to be held on 27 September 2019, and the Ocean Conference to be held from 2 to 6 June 2020.

72. Delegations thanked the Focal Point for his statement and expressed their appreciation to, and support for the work of, UN-Oceans and its members. Responding to a question regarding the coordination of activities for the Decade by UN-Oceans, the Focal Point noted that UN-Oceans was consulting the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to contribute to core documents and meetings, as well as to identify and develop other activities relevant to the Decade. With regard to the review of the UN-Oceans terms of reference, which was deferred by the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, reference was made to the background paper prepared by UN-Oceans to assist Member States in that review, which highlighted the current achievements of UN-Oceans and the results that the mechanism could deliver if sufficiently empowered and supported, including financially.

73. In reference to the second statement, the Focal Point provided information on the work of UN-Oceans in developing a methodology for the agreed indicator to monitor progress towards the achievement of target 14.C of Goal 14. He outlined the draft methodology developed by UN-Oceans, as reflected in an explanatory note made available to delegations in hard copy and circulated by email on 11 June 2019.

[1] See www.unoceans.org.

74. The Focal Point emphasized that there was a sense of urgency to progress in the development of the methodology in 2019 to enable the submission to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators of a request for the reclassification of indicator 14.C.1 from tier III to tier II. Regarding the time frame for submitting such a request, the representative of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs clarified that relevant documentation to support the request, including the results of the pilot testing phase, would need to be received by the Group at least one month in advance of its next meeting, which would take place from 21 to 25 October 2019. That meeting would be the last opportunity to request tier reclassification in 2019, before the comprehensive review of all indicators by the Statistical Commission in 2020.

75. Delegations expressed their appreciation to UN-Oceans, in particular the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, for its efforts in progressing in the development of the methodology for indicator 14.C.1 and for the consultations undertaken with States in that regard.

76. With regard to the substance of the draft methodology, several delegations proposed that the methodology should be further streamlined, confining it to ratification or accession and implementation of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing agreements. Furthermore, it was proposed that States could be invited to report on other ocean-related instruments that, in their view, also implemented international law, as reflected in the Convention, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources. A delegation expressed the view that information relating to indicator 14.C.1 should be collected through national reporting platforms rather than through a questionnaire and welcomed efforts to connect the draft methodology with such platforms. Another delegation drew attention to the challenges in capacity given the multiplicity of national agencies that would have relevant information and the existing reporting channels, noting that responding to a single questionnaire could present challenges. Specific proposals were made with respect to the drafting and content of the questions to be included in the proposed questionnaire as part of the draft methodology.

77. Regarding the next steps in progressing in the development of the methodology, several delegations requested more time to consult and reflect on the draft methodology, while recognizing the need to proceed in a timely manner. In that regard, it was proposed that the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea circulate a revised explanatory note, taking into account the views expressed, to all permanent missions to the United Nations and to the States parties to the Convention, and request their feedback within four to six weeks, before proceeding with pilot testing. A request was made to circulate the note also in French. Depending on the feedback received, the possibility of engaging in further discussions on the methodology in the sidelines of the third session of the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction before proceeding with pilot testing was also raised.

78. The Director of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea confirmed that an explanatory note detailing the revised draft methodology would be circulated for comments to all permanent missions to the United Nations and to the States parties to the Convention, as requested by delegations, in advance of a possible pilot testing phase.

Agenda item 5
Process for the selection of topics and panellists so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly

79. Referring to paragraph 352 of General Assembly resolution 73/124, the Co-Chairs invited views and proposals on ways to devise a transparent, objective and inclusive process for the selection of topics and panellists so as to facilitate the work of the Assembly during informal consultations concerning the annual resolution on oceans and the law of the sea.

80. No statements were made under the item.

Agenda item 6
Issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea

81. The Co-Chairs drew attention to a composite streamlined list of issues that could benefit from the attention of the General Assembly and invited comments from representatives.

82. The Co-Chairs also invited representatives to submit additional topics that could benefit from the attention of the General Assembly.

83. An observer delegation suggested that the seaward implications of sea level rise as a result of climate change be considered in the light of the possible effects of changing baselines for maritime activities and applicable legal regimes.