

## Annex 2: Political and Business Platforms and Processes

Additional information in relation to Section 3 of the strategy

### Ocean Issues Have Moved up the Political Agenda

- The first UN Ocean conference was held in 2017. Its main outcome was the adoption of the “Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action” committing to “halting and reversing the decline in the health and productivity of our ocean and its ecosystems and to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity.” A registry of voluntary commitments was also opened, made up of 1465 actions to which governments, intergovernmental organizations (including UN Environment), private sector and civil society organizations committed to advance SDG14 implementation.

It is now expected that the UN General Assembly will convene the second UN Ocean conference in April-May 2020 in Lisbon, Portugal, co-chaired by Portugal and Kenya. The Lisbon conference would be an opportunity to review progress on the implementation of both the voluntary commitments and the action to which all governments committed in the Call for Action, to identify gaps and to make further progress toward the implementation of SDG14 (including Targets 2, 4, 5 and 6 which mature in 2020). It is unclear whether these conferences will continue to be held every three years through 2029, as originally proposed by the governments of Fiji and Sweden in 2015; they have the potential to drive political change around ocean conservation by keeping it on the agenda at the highest levels of government.

- Initiated by former US Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014, annual multi-stakeholder “Our Ocean” conferences have taken place in Washington DC (2014 and 2016), Valparaiso, Chile (2015), Malta (2017) and Bali (2018), and two more are scheduled in 2019 (Norway) and 2020 (Palau). Voluntary commitments and pledges are routinely made at these conferences, but more importantly they have served to maintain momentum for ocean conservation.

### Mobilization around the Concept of the ‘Blue Economy’

- A group of Heads of State and government have created a High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy to “catalyze bold, pragmatic solutions for the ocean. The panel will develop, catalyze and support solutions to ocean “health and wealth” in governance, policy, technology and finance in line with SDG14.” Co-chaired by prime ministers of Norway and Palau, members include Australia, Chile, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Namibia, Portugal and UNSG special envoy Peter Thomson. The World Resources Institute serves as the panel’s Secretariat.

The panel has three goals: 1) promote shared understanding of relationship between ocean and economy. 2) Pursue recognition of the balance between conservation and use of the ocean. 3) Highlight innovations in governance, markets, incentives and policy to align economic

development with protection of the ocean's natural capital. It will produce recommendations to feed into the 2020 UN Ocean conference, including a possible recommendation to develop a "Paris Agreement" for the ocean (modelled after the climate agreement adopted in Paris in 2015).

- In September 2018 the World Bank announced the creation of 'PROBLUE' a multi-donor trust fund to support SDG14, addressing marine pollution, overfishing, coastal erosion and sustainable growth of coastal economies. The fund is part of the World Bank's Blue Economy program. Donors have committed \$75 million to the fund so far.
- The UN Global Compact's "Action Platform for Sustainable Ocean Business" includes 35 of the world's largest companies, banks and investment funds, all of whom are leaders in the sectors in which they operate. The platform is developing principles on how business should behave to meet the SDGs (paper to be delivered in 2019). They are also working to identify opportunities for green ocean-based energy sources and green growth of the ocean economy.

### **Government and Business Initiatives on Plastic Pollution:**

- Global Partnership on Marine Litter (under UN Environment and the GPA) and its Clean Seas campaign – launched in Rio in 2012, the initiative focuses specifically on marine litter and microplastics rather than plastics more generally. Its main goal is the reduction and management of marine litter through a number of specific objectives.
- Charlevoix Ocean Plastics Charter - in 2018, G7 members committed to take action toward a lifecycle management approach to plastics in the economy. The charter includes specific targets and goals.
- G7 Marine Plastic Litter Innovation Challenge – aims to incentivize the development of innovative social or technological solutions for a more sustainable management of plastics, including by finding innovative ways to enhance waste management of plastics that may become marine litter.
- Global Plastics Platform – launched 25 September 2018, to encourage new commitments to reduce plastic pollution and explore innovative ways to change the habits of design, production, consumption and disposal of plastics.
- The New Plastics Economy Global Commitment – launched by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and UN Environment on 30 October 2018; it aims to act as a lighthouse, where front-running businesses and governments working on solutions that address root causes of plastic waste and pollution can inspire others to do the same. More than 290 of the world's leading packaging brands committed to ensure that 100% of plastic packaging can be reused, recycled or composted by 2025.
- Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Marine Plastics (aka 'Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance') – launched in April 2018 and led by the UK and Vanuatu, this is an agreement

by all 53 Commonwealth countries to actively co-operate to solve ocean-related problems and meet commitments for sustainable ocean development.

- Communities of Ocean Action, implementation of SDG14.1 (marine pollution) – Initiative to follow-up on the implementation of voluntary commitments made at the UN Ocean Conference in 2017, to spur further action and maintain momentum until the next Ocean Conference in 2020.
- GPA: The information paper submitted to the third UN Environment Assembly laid out three options for addressing the problem of marine litter: The Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter was established to move this forward. Its work will be reported to the UNEA in March 2019.
- European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy – adopted in January 2018, it is the first-ever Europe-wide strategy on plastics, to support the transition towards a more circular economy.

### **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):**

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative ((SOI) and the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) are two programmes under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

#### **Sustainable Ocean Initiative**

The mission of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative consists of providing a global platform to build partnerships and enhance capacity to conserve and sustainably use marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner. An SOI Action Plan 2015-2020 is currently being implemented.

#### **Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs)**

Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) are areas in the ocean which are considered special because they provide functions to support ecosystem services that are important to the health of the ocean. Summary reports were submitted to the UN Secretary-General by means of a letter which was subsequently circulated as an official document to the 72th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Bringing experts together to increase knowledge and awareness is a good thing in general terms, even though effective conservation take time to bear fruits.

#### **International Coral Reefs Initiative (ICRI)**

Founded in 1994 at the first Conference of the Parties to the CBD, ICRI is an informal partnership now made up of more than 60 members with a view to encourage the adoption of best practice in sustainable management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, build capacity, and raise awareness at all levels on the plight of coral reefs around the world. ICRI operates through its networks and committees, which organize regional meetings and workshops on specific topics. ICRI Members States may choose voluntarily to implement ICRI's objectives through National Coral Reef Initiatives.

The ICRI Secretariat (one developed and one developing country) rotates every two years, and is hosted by ICRI members on a voluntary basis. For the period 2018-2019, ICRI is hosted by the Principality of Monaco, and co-chaired by Monaco, Australia and Indonesia until mid-2020.