



First stakeholder briefing on the next UN Ocean Conference

Tuesday 19 March 2024, 14.00-15.00 CET, Online

Minutes of the meeting

- The recording of the webinar is now available [online](#).
- Visit the [website](#) regularly for updates and upcoming events.

Updates about UNOC 3

Ms. Lotta Tahtien (*Chief, Outreach and Partnership Branch, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs*)

- UNOC 3, co-hosted by France and Costa Rica, will take place from 9 to 13 June 2025. The overall theme of the conference is « *Accelerating action and mobilising all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean* ». A preparatory committee will be held on 2 July 2024 at the UN headquarters in New York.
- Earlier this year, the UN Secretary General appointed:
 - *Mr Li Junhua* (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) as the Secretary-General of the Conference to oversee its preparations ;
 - *Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares* (Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and UN Legal Counsel) as the Special Advisor to the Presidents of the Conference (to be appointed) on ocean and legal matters.
- UN DESA, as the Conference Secretariat, and in collaboration with the co-hosts, will coordinate spaces and opportunities for stakeholders to engage (i.e. managing registration, organising consultations, coordinating stakeholder speaking engagements during formal meetings, and compiling written statements and inputs from participants).
- The format of the conference was decided by UN member states. The official programme will feature a combination of plenary sessions and 10 Ocean Action Panels. They will be complemented by 3 Special Events, before the Conference, as well as side-events during. Details will be shared on the [conference website](#).
- Outcomes of UNOC 2025 will include: (1) An action-oriented and intergovernmental declaration, focusing on ways to accelerate and drive collective action to support the implementation of SDG 14 ; (2) A Conference report, summarising discussions held during the Ocean Action Panels and listing the voluntary commitments announced in Nice, which will be referred to as the "Nice Ocean Action Plan".

Vision for the UNOC 3 – Perspectives from the co-hosts

Ms. Mariamalia Jiménez Coto (*Chief, Department for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Costa Rica*)

- She presented the Conference "*Immersed in Change*" organised by Costa Rica on 7-8 June 2024 – on the road to UNOC 3. The Conference will be action-oriented (e.g., discussions on best practices, challenges), and result in a "Declaration of peace for the ocean".

- She insisted on the crucial role all stakeholders should play in the process, including in the preparatory meeting where the themes of the 10 Ocean Action Panels will be decided.

Mr. Ashok Adicéam (*Head of Global Public Affairs: Multilateral Engagement for Ocean Development, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France*) and **Ms. Romane Prigent** (*Diplomat, UN Department, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France*)

- Ms. Prigent noted that France would like the 10 Ocean Action Panels to be action-oriented and supportive of the creation of coalitions. She reminded participants that the 3 Special Events will respectively focus on science, blue economy and finance, and adaptation to sea level rise.
- Mr. Adicéam stressed that all types of ocean users should be active in UNOC 3.

[A call to action for SDG 14](#)

H.E. Ambassador Peter Thomson (*UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean*)

- H. E. Peter Thomson emphasised the ocean's vital role in climate regulation and repeated his daily mantra: "there is no healthy planet without a healthy ocean". He called for collective responsibility, and mentioned several priorities:
 - Accelerating negotiations on the Plastic Treaty,
 - Banning harmful subsidies to industrial fishing fleets, encouraging sustainable resource use, supporting small-scale fishermen, and restoring global fish stocks,
 - Encouraging the achievement of the 30x30 objective,
 - Developing scientific knowledge.
- He expressed gratitude to those involved in the 9 [Communities of Ocean Action](#) (COA) for their contributions to previous UNOC editions and encouraged stakeholders to [join relevant COAs](#) to actively engage in UNOC 3 preparation.

[From Lisbon to Nice: Expectations and key messages for UNOC 3](#)

Mr. Sérgio Carvalho (*Counselor, Legal Adviser and lead on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, Permanent Mission of Portugal to the UN*) shared lessons learned from UNOC 2 in Lisbon:

- the importance of pre-conference mobilisation of stakeholders. Portugal's "Blue Talks" with global stakeholders, supported by embassies and partner institutions, significantly boosted interest and engagement ahead of the conference.
- the significance of planning and facilitating exchange spaces for stakeholders.
- He identified 2 opportunities for increased engagement: (1) A better integration of special events within the conference; (2) More physical venues to organise side-events; and highlighted the need for greater political visibility.

Ms. Loreley Picourt (*Executive Director, Ocean & Climate Platform*)

- She presented the results of the consultation "[A Call to All the Voices of the Ocean](#)":
 - Stakeholders from diverse backgrounds highlighted opportunities for improvement and emphasised the need for better pre-conference communication.
 - Key concerns include: placing the ocean at the core of all SDGs, enhancing synergies among fora, addressing global fatigue over announcements versus actual progress, and anticipating the post-2030.

- She also presented the [Let's Be Nice to The Ocean](#) initiative, carried out by the Varda Group with the support of the OCP and partners. The initiative aims at identifying out-of-the-box ideas (e.g., making ocean protection the norm rather than the exception).
- Lastly, she noted that UNOC 3 can accelerate ocean governance by boosting the leadership and political momentum.

Mr. Puvendra Akkiah (*IDP Manager, Durban/eThekweni Municipality Local Government, South Africa*) underlined the critical need to support and protect coastal cities and economies.

- He advocated for regional and local level thinking and cooperation, emphasising the need for holistic strategies.
- He highlighted disproportionate impacts of climate change on traditional communities, developing countries, and Small Island Developing States (SIDs), calling for their full integration into UNOC planning.
- He urged fundamental shifts in economic models, production, consumption systems, and climate change strategies for sustainability.

Ms. Palmira Cuellar-Ramirez (*Oceans Youth Constituency, Major Group for Children and Youth*) called for more effective environmental protection action, especially for the ocean.

- She encouraged swift action, with intergenerational dialogue and more justice.
- She recalled that children and youth have a major role to play, as they suffer from the consequences of climate change on the ocean. They should be part of every decision about the ocean as it is a matter of human and children rights.
- She invited the co-organisers to further involve youth and children in the planning of the conference.

[Special Accreditation of non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders – First Round](#)

Ms. Kathryn Good (*Head, UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service, DGC*) provided details regarding the first round of the special accreditation process.

- The special accreditation process only concerns non-governmental organisations and stakeholders:
 - Who were not previously accredited,
 - Who do not have ECOSOC status,
 - And who are not accredited through one of the previous conferences.
- The deadline to apply for this round is 22 March 2024 on the [dedicated website](#).
- Supporting documentation will be required, including: (1) A letter from and signed by the head of your organisation, with the letterhead of your organisation (see a [sample](#)); (2) Proof of legal status of the organisation; (3) Copy of the annual or other reports of the organisation demonstrating relevance to the conference.
- The Secretariat will review all applications and assess the relevance of the work of the applicants. The President of the UN General Assembly will submit a list of recommended organisations for Member States to review, on a non-objection basis.
- A second round of application for Special Accreditation will open later in 2024. Deadlines will be posted online as they become available.