



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment

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PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

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Humanity faces an existential triple planetary crisis impacting human rights everywhere, exacerbated by systemic and historic inequalities. Marginalised populations, including women, girls, children, youth, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, small-scale fisherfolks, local communities, persons with disabilities and LGBTQ, are today bearing the heaviest burden. At the same time, war and conflict threatens peace, as well as decades of advance for human rights, poverty reduction and sustainable development. The enjoyment of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (HR2HE) is under threat.

Yet, there are still vital opportunities for states and businesses and all kinds of actors to take a positive action. It is in this context that the SR prepared this report. Scientists have described **nine planetary boundaries**. Already six of them have been crossed, and **the seventh - ocean acidification** - will be closed within the next few years if trends are not reversed. These trends can be and must be reversed, and states need to prevent and mitigate today's negative impact of



the triple planetary crisis, which causes increasing occurrences of dead zones in the ocean, extreme weather events, marine heat waves, deoxygenation, alarming levels of biodiversity loss, and millions of people dying, losing their livelihoods or being forcibly displaced. These impacts are already affecting the rights of about 2.4 billion people globally, living within 100 kilometres from an oceanic coast.

In addition, **economic losses from ocean mismanagement** is estimated in nearly \$1 trillion annually, which is about the GDP of many wealthy countries in the planet. Dementia impacts are happening despite over 600 international, regional, and bilateral agreements and many significant ongoing efforts addressing ocean governance. The ocean, this vast interconnected single biome which has sustained life for 3.5 million years, is often treated as a mere resource rather than a shared source for life or common heritage.

The ocean connects humans, ecosystems, and societies. The **ocean also brings balance to the planet**, and it is fundamental for many cultures and identities, including for food, housing, work, culture, spirituality, medicine, transport, education, and physical and mental health. The ocean, as we also know, guarantees food security for millions of people who depend on high-quality protein and micronutrients, because, for example, around 492 million people, half of them women, depend at least partially on small-scale fishery for sustenance and income.

It provides also interconnected habitats for marine life, which is essential for enjoying healthy ecosystems. Between **50 to 80% of the oxygen comes from the ocean**, even from the deep-sea bed where dark oxygen is produced. Key ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass meadows, and the deep sea support large percentages of marine life, helping also to mitigate and adapt climate change. In fact, the **ocean is the largest active carbon sink**, storing a third of climate emissions and absorbing over 90% of the heat also for human-caused climate change. The SR will also address a few of the challenges, including weak governance and silent mandates preventing adequate participation and coordination and inclusion of right holders.

Industrial fisheries prioritising profits and operating largely with **unsustainable, destructive fishing practises** to attend a demand that mostly is coming from wealthier nations, while devastating marine ecosystems mainly from the global south. This industry is also a major source of climate emissions, contributing with about 1.2% of oil consumption globally. While illegal, under-regulated, and uncontrolled fishing is responsible for about 20% of global catches, as it employs destructive methods to the bottom of the sea. And it is also being linked with human rights abuses, including forced labour and trafficking of people affecting hundreds, thousands of people.

The lack of support for small-scale fisheries is also a key challenge that the SR identified, including the research and the 80 inputs received for the report. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, **small-scale fisheries combined employ 98% of the world's fisheries** and produce over half of marine fish supply, while receiving little support as subsidies primarily benefit industrial sectors. Disordered coastal urbanisation, marine and land pollution, including approximately 14 million tonnes of plastic entering the ocean annually, pollution from seawater, and contamination caused by heavy metals and agricultural runoff of biochemicals are also key challenges, as climate change that is driving irreversible damage on the ocean and new and technology-intensive developments, including deep-sea mining and marine engineering, pose insignificant



risks without sufficient evidence to demonstrate otherwise. They increase human rights violations against ocean defenders, driven by the expansion of harmful activities in marine and coastal environments.

It is urgent to address these challenges and achieve more effective **ocean management while respecting human rights**, mainstreaming the HR2HE. This approach will help us to equip not only states, but also the UN systems, Indigenous Peoples, business, and other actors to adopt an ecosystem-based approach, integrated perspectives, and apply existing standards, also contributing to achieve different multilateral agreements, including the SDGs, and to halt and reduce plastic pollution, to comply also with multilateral commitments, including the conservation of conventional biological diversity, and to advance the objective to protect 30% of the land and the ocean by 2030 while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, and others.

Implementing and improving states' obligations to prevent, control, and reduce harm to the environment by regulating, controlling, and enforcing laws will effectively prevent damages and restore the ones that have been done. The duty of businesses to respect human rights, including the right to a healthy environment, is a vital opportunity for the ocean.

PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY VISIT REPORTS

The SR presents the report drafted by his predecessor, Dr. David Boyd, on his country visit to the **Maldives**, conducted just before the end of his mandate in April 2024. The SR extends her sincere gratitude to the Government of the Maldives for its leadership in championing the global recognition on the right to a healthy environment and for facilitating this very important visit.

The Maldives faces **substantial environmental challenges** exacerbated by the climate crisis. Air pollution in Malé notably exceeds WHO standards, resulting in severe health impacts. Although most residents have access to pipe water, contamination from salt water intrusion, and inadequate rainwater harvest pose serious concerns.

The Maldives' sustainable tuna fishery, vital for Maldivians' right to food, is under threat from **foreign overfishing** and climate-related changes to the marine environment. Furthermore, efficient waste management, including the open burning of waste and toxic material imports, significantly compromises both public health and ecosystems. Unsustainable land reclamation and rapid urban development severely impact the unique marine biodiversity and ecosystems essential for the protection of the HR2HE in the Maldives.

Despite acute vulnerability due to rising sea levels and extreme weather events caused by climate change, the Maldives continues subsidising fossil fuels instead of **urgently transitioning to renewable energy**. The SR encourages the Maldives to make this change. Moreover, systemic gaps remain in protecting environmental defenders and ensuring public participation, access to information, and justice in environmental matters.

Recommendations in the report include reallocation of fossil fuel subsidies to renewable energy, strengthening environmental legislation and its enforcement, ensuring effective environmental impact assessment, enhancing procedural rights, and protecting environmental defenders. These measures are essential to secure a sustainable future in the Maldives.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

Welcoming the Maldives' statement, the SR appreciates the country's follow-up on the recommendations addressed, which shows the importance of country visits. It is about building upon a dialogue, even agree to disagree. Most importantly, it is the SR's mandate to visit and provide support, to identify opportunities to advance and improve.

The rationale of the SR's thematic report dedicated to the ocean is to tackle the challenge of **siloed and compartmentalised ocean governance**. For the SR, it is not a surprise that even at the UN, but also institutionally, it is as if we have separate roles with human rights and expertise institutions even, and then negotiations regarding the environment and climate separate. But we know that the human rights and also the climate is connected. That is one of the key things that the ocean brings. One of the key elements that the SR included in the recommendation is to mainstream the implementation of HR2HE.

Stressing her participation in the **UN Ocean Conference** in June, the SR further reiterates the need to incorporate the human rights-based approach and the HR2HE is because, unfortunately, they are both missing in political resolutions. Hence, she encourages countries not only to advance this conversation in Geneva and at the UNHRC, but also to take the message to the UNGA so that we can actually incorporate this in a very consistent way. She also welcomes comments on the need to incorporate **science-based approach**, including ancestral knowledge and Indigenous People's knowledge, thereby making reference to the annexes to her report, namely the Spillhaus Global Projection that helps us see that the ocean is at the centre of the planet and continents around, and a summary of legislations from different states that are very helpful to understand how already many of the states are including human rights in legislations.

Her report also raises concerns over the **increasing dependence on fossil fuels**, and this includes increasing offshore projects, oil and gas projects in the coast. In this regard, states have the obligations to regulate, control, and implement environmental impact assessments, but also the precautionary principle. She also welcomes the reference to the IDTOS advisory opinion. Although not all are State Parties to UNCLOS, the advisory opinion is a very important tool to understand obligations regarding the ocean.

As outlined in her report to the UNGA, the SR reiterates the importance to continue **implementing the HR2HE and the advancement of its recognition**. Welcoming the ongoing efforts in this direction deployed by Pakistan and Mauritius, the SR stands ready to support in this endeavour, most notably by bringing its contribution to the ASEAN Declaration and to the recognition of the HR2HE by the Council of Europe. Welcoming many initiatives such as the Blue Economy, the SR stresses the crucial importance of incorporating a human rights-based approach which goes hand-in-hand with **access to information, participation, and access to justice**.

The SR qualifies the **ocean as our common heritage** and encourages all stakeholders to make this happen in reality. Mainstreaming in that sense the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is very important because it not only increases human rights protection but also gives states, Indigenous Peoples, businesses, civil society organisations and all actors the tools that today we are lacking.



The SR also highlights the importance of **securing customary and traditional ocean-related rights of Indigenous Peoples and small-scale fisheries**; protecting ocean defenders and their invaluable role; ensuring gender equity through the active participation of women in decision-making and access to resources; protecting intergenerational equity for present generations, including children and youth, and also the rights of future generations. Immediate, ambitious and coherent action is also necessary for achieving the SDGs, including SDG 14 related to the ocean and water, as well as multilateral goals to mitigate irreparable loss and damage and advance the restoration and protection for marine species.

The SR places emphasis on the whole society approach and the use and the promotion of sustainable practises to the ocean, including protecting marine ecosystems. Implementing the **precautionary principle** is absolutely key as well in order to effectively protect the ocean and coastal ecosystems, especially regarding most fragile and vulnerable areas, including the deep sea bed. The SR also applauds the leadership of 32 states that are using the precautionary principle to **stop deep sea mining**, a process that invites other states to join and to give us time to make the best decision possible. The SR further refers to the imperative of providing a **safe space for environmental human rights defenders** who protect the ocean and recognise the critical role that they have. Ensuring also that multilateral, regional and bilateral negotiation conferences related to the ocean and inclusion of the human rights based approach, including the right to a healthy environment is key.

With reference to the **UN Ocean Conference** in Nice, the SR encourages Permanent Missions in both Geneva and in New York to specifically include the human rights-based approach and the HR2HE in the decision and the political declaration in Nice, otherwise the opportunity to advance coherent, consistent and holistic approach to the protection of the environment and the ocean will be lost. The SR is very grateful for states' recognition that the ocean is key. The ocean is one single biome, but **ocean issues are also human rights issues**.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by the Country Concerned

The **Maldives** extends its appreciation to the SR on the HR2HE for his recent visit to the Maldives and for the comprehensive report presented to the UNHRC. The SR's engagement with key stakeholders during the visit facilitated constructive dialogue on preserving environment and human rights challenges. The Maldives further welcomes the recommendations outlined in the SR's report. The Maldives seizes this opportunity to address the key areas outlined in the report and to provide updates on specific observations and recommendations.

The **nexus between human rights and environment** is a lived reality that defines the Maldivians' daily lives, their resilience and their aspiration as a nation. This conviction has long driven the Maldives advocacy for the global recognition of the HR2HE, both within the UNHRC and the UN General Assembly. The Maldives appreciates the SR's acknowledgement of its leadership in this regard and its commitment to international human rights obligations as a State Party to eight out of the nine core human rights treaties. As highlighted in the SR's report, the Maldives continues to face significant challenges driven by climate change and environmental degradation. The Government has taken proactive steps to mitigate these challenges by strengthening regulatory



frameworks, investing in sustainable infrastructure and fostering community engagement in environment governance.

At the heart of its efforts lies the **Climate Emergency Act**, which serves as the cornerstone of our legislative and policy framework. The Maldives remains resolute in translating this mandate into concrete action. One of its key priorities is a transformative shift in energy policy. The Government has set an ambitious target to generate **33% of its electricity through renewable energy resources** by 2028, a significant departure from our current resilience reliance on fossil fuels. The Maldives has also submitted its third nationally determined contribution last month, setting a target of **reducing 1.52 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions** by 2035 with adequate international support. Ensuring environmental sustainability extends beyond climate mitigation.

The Government is also prioritising **water and sanitation infrastructure**, working to enhance access to waste management services across all Maldivian islands by the end of 2025. This initiative seeks to improve environmental health and promote sustainable waste management practises nationwide. In line with the SR's recommendations, the Maldives have also taken decisive steps to integrate environment sustainability and mainstream climate change into the tourism sector.

As stated in its recent nationally determined contributions (NDCs), the Maldives is directing our efforts towards **climate proofing the tourism infrastructure** and its products through improved access to adaptation finance and high quality climate insurance schemes and expanding capacity-building initiatives on **climate resilience** in the tourism sector. The Maldives recognises that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect marginalised and vulnerable communities, including women. Remaining committed to inclusive equitable policies that uplift women, youth and at-risk communities, the Maldives is paving the way for a low-carbon climate resilient future that leaves no one behind.

Beyond its borders, the Maldives continues to lead **global climate advocacy**. At COP29 last year, the Government of Maldives called for a new climate finance framework that reflects the true scale of the crisis we face. The Maldives' message was clear. The world must move beyond billions and towards trillions in climate financing. As such, the Maldives welcomes the SR's recommendation and his calls for stronger international cooperation to support Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in adaptation and mitigation efforts. While progress has been made, challenges remain.

The Maldives shares the SR's concerns and recognise the need for stronger legislative frameworks, capacity-building and improved access to technological and financial assistance. Addressing these issues requires urgent action and **sustained solidarity from the international community**. The Maldives reiterates the importance of adopting a human rights-based approach to climate action. This includes mainstreaming human rights principles across climate policies, adaptation and mitigation strategies, and international financing mechanisms. In closing, the Maldives looks forward to constructive engagement with the UNHRC and its mechanisms. It reiterates its standing invitation to all Special Procedures mandate holders and looks forward to continued dialogue and collaboration in advancing justice and upholding human rights for all.



Views Expressed by State Delegations

On behalf of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Samoa and Vanuatu, **Palau** explains that as large oceanic countries and territories, the **Pacific Island countries** hold immense value for our ocean and celebrate a deep connection to our community, natural environment, resources, livelihoods, faiths, cultural values and traditional knowledge. Their aspiration is to empower the people of the Pacific to live in a sustainably managed blue Pacific continent. While firmly maintaining resilience against environmental threats, we need to do more to protect our ocean, as it holds the key to addressing some of our most pressing existential challenges, particularly climate change. We also urgently need to safeguard the human rights of coastal communities, women, indigenous peoples, fisher folks, youth, older persons and other marginalised groups in all ocean-related activities by recognising customary rights, securing preferential access and the co-management of coastal areas and resources. To protect the ocean, states must implement their international obligations with an ecosystem and human rights-based approach, grounded in the best available scientific knowledge, including traditional and ancestral knowledge. The Pacific Island countries call urgently for action to assist large ocean states that are particularly susceptible to pollution of the marine environment in their efforts to address marine pollution by providing scientific, technical and educational assistance.

Portugal, speaking on behalf of the **Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLC)** reaffirms the Community's support to the mandate of the SR and thanks her for presenting her report, which shows the impact of damage to the oceans on the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to a clean, healthy, sustainable environment. The CPLP recognises the urgency of promoting an integrated and holistic approach on the oceans, incorporating the environmental, social and economic pillars. Damage to marine ecosystems directly affects the lives of millions of persons, including those in marginalised communities. The CPLP's commitment to the protection of the oceans and promoting the HR2HE must be marked by a joint, inclusive approach which takes into account different needs and circumstances, particularly in developing countries like the small island developing states and coastal and island communities. The CPLP calls for the implementation of science-based measures and emphasises the relevance of the climate-ocean nexus and the importance of protecting biodiversity and the marine environment, as well as measures to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

On behalf of the **Arab Group, Jordan** agrees with the SR on the importance of the oceans for life on Earth and the need for measures to counter damage to the oceans, which are at the root of the triple world crisis and promote the HR2HE. Developing countries are at the forefront of climate change, aggravated by the colonial heritage and unequal economic circumstances, noting the role of business in preserving the environment and local communities, protecting them from the consequences of their activities. The Arab Group agrees with the SR's conclusion regarding the dangerous consequences of Israel's invasion of Gaza and the flagrant disregard for the right to a healthy environment. The ceasefire must be protected, humanitarian aid must be allowed to reach the people of Gaza and we must prevent further degradation of the environment there.

Taking the floor on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), **Kuwait jointly with the GCC** noted the SR's report focussing on the nexus between the ocean and human rights. The GCC is convinced of the importance of protecting the oceans as a key part of the global



climate and part of food security. For millions of persons, it is essential to step up international cooperation to stop pollution, climate change and damage to the oceans and promote the right to a clean and healthy environment in order to protect all other human rights, the right to food, the right to health, the right to development and others. The GCC is particularly committed to protecting the marine environment. It has policies and procedures for sustainable fishing, protection of biodiversity and the blue economy. In this context, the GCC states actively contributing to international efforts to protect the oceans, including through regional organisations involved in this issue and intends to continue this to protect future generations.

Taking the floor on behalf of the **African Group, Ghana** acknowledges the report's findings that colonial legacies, unjust economic policies and historical marginalisation have exacerbated vulnerabilities for African coastal communities, small island developing states and people of African descent. Ocean degradation driven by pollution, over-exploitation and climate change threatens fundamental rights to food, health, culture and livelihoods rights already strained by inequality access to resources and finances. The African Group emphasises the importance of sustainable fisheries, noting that small scale fisher folk, particularly women who constitute nearly half of Africa's fishing workforce, are backbone of food security and cultural identity for millions. It is imperative to protect artisanal fisheries from industrial encroachment, noting that these communities are central to governance framework as the ancestral knowledge and rights are indispensable to holistic solution. African coastal island nations face essential threats from rising sea levels, pollution and extreme weather which require targeted protection and inclusion in decision making. Climate finance remains vital. Developed nations must fulfil commitments under the Paris Agreement and Human Control Framework for adaptation, just transition and debt relief. The African Group commends the emphasis on mainstreaming the rights to clean, healthy environment.

Iceland jointly with the Nordic-Baltic countries thank the SR for an informative report and for underlining the critical importance of healthy oceans for safeguarding of human rights, including those of Indigenous Peoples. Oceans are not only vital to the global ecosystems, but are also essential for the well-being of billions of people worldwide. The challenges the planet faces, - pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity - threaten the environment and human rights. They underline that only when we balance conservation and sustainable use, as outlined in SDG 14, can we protect our oceans for sustainable development. This means working based on the best scientific advice, taking into account indigenous, ancestral as well as local knowledge, to strengthen measures to prevent over exploitation, reduce marine pollution and support industries that respect human rights and endorse sustainable practises. By promoting responsible fishing, marine protected areas and other effective measures and circular blue economies, we can safeguard the oceans while ensuring access to vital resources for current and future generations.

Speaking on behalf of a **cross-regional group of 45 countries, Costa Rica** states that environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs), including those working on ocean issues, are amongst the most at risk human rights defenders in the world. These defenders, including women and girls environmental human rights defenders, work at the front line of environmental protection, often in remote or isolated locations. They frequently seek to exercise their human rights to push back against unsustainable and environmentally damaging projects. For their brave



work, they often face great risks, including extrajudicial killing, arbitrary detention and criminalisation. The work of EHRDs is in favour of sustainable development, and as such, we all should protect their work. They also play a positive and legitimate role on the HR2HE. They do incredibly important work to protect the environment, including the ocean, from biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution. The best way to protect the environment is to protect and empower those who seek to defend the environment. The UNHRC should step up its efforts to better protect and empower EHRDs, particularly women and girls, by promoting equitable, diverse, meaningful and safe representation in all of relevant work. They should also safely participate in other UN fora, including the International Environmental Conference on Ocean Protection, Biodiversity and Climate Change, including COP30 in Brazil, as well as the proceedings of the outcome documents. The cross-regional group urges all States to encourage their meaningful participation in those meetings.

Speaking on behalf of the **Caricom Group, Jamaica** draws the Council's attention to World Bank's data showing that marine ecosystems of all Caricom countries provide food, livelihoods and income to over 100 million people through fisheries, tourism, coastal protection and transportation. The Caricom Group remains gravely concerned that climate change is driving irreversible impacts on the ocean. These impacts threaten the region's economic growth and sustainable development as tourism accounts for 15% of the region's GDP. The Caricom Group supports the call for the promotion of sustainable ocean-based economies and reiterates the region's call for the support of the international community to inter-area, explore new technologies, sustainable practises and innovative solutions to advance innovation in ocean-related industries. CARICOM Heads of Government last month highlighted the slow progress on mobilising climate finance as well as on global stocktake implementation. The Caricom Group concurs that immediate, ambitious and coherent action is necessary for the achievement of SDG 14 and other multilateral goals. It is important that the upcoming 2025 UN Ocean Conference and the resumed plastic treaty negotiations deliver concrete outcomes that protect the ocean for present and future generations.

The **Dominican Republic** takes the floor on behalf of a **group of SIDS** highlighting that SIDS are the guardians of huge marine areas, and oceans are a question of survival. SIDS are aware of the fragility of our communities because they depend on the oceans, our food security, our economies, cultures and our means of subsistence are closely linked to marine ecosystems, which means that ocean degradation is a direct threat to our human rights and sustainable development. Increasing pollution, over-exploitation, acidification and climate change are a threat to marine biodiversity. The threats posed by the proliferation of kelp, rising sea levels and more and more extreme weather events require urgent global responses. The group echoes the SR's calls for an inclusive, evidence-based approach to ocean management and action to mitigate and adapt to climate biodiversity and pollution crisis are urgent in line with the principles of equity and common differentiated responsibilities and capabilities. The group recalls the recent ITLOS advisory opinion on states' obligations concerning climate change on the marine environment and reaffirms its commitment to policies to conserve and sustainably use marine resources. More international cooperation is needed to make progress, climate finance commitments to be honoured.

Monaco underlines the interconnection between food security, health, culture, and environmental rights, stressing that states have clear obligations to uphold these rights. Monaco raises concerns about governance gaps in ocean protection and questions how global governance structures could be made more effective in ensuring marine conservation. Monaco reaffirms its commitment to international cooperation, noting that it has ratified the UN agreement on the sustainable use and conservation of marine resources. It also announces the renewal of financial support for ocean conservation efforts, reinforcing its dedication to environmental sustainability.

The **Marshall Islands** emphasize firsthand how true rings the sentiment that the ocean is life. As the Marshall Islands rose from the ocean, the latter is the source of their myths and legends. It feeds their people, it connects them with their neighbours, and it supports their economy. For generations, Pacific Islanders have been the custodians of the Blue Continent. However, the ocean, as their ancestors knew, it is vanishing. While sea level rise threatens our shores, oceanic water temperatures are increasing and causing coral bleaching. Among many other threats are vessels and plastic pollution and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. These are vast challenges gravely threatening the human rights of the Marshallese people, including their rights to a healthy environment. Looking forward to the third UN Oceans Conference in Nice this summer, the Marshall Islands stresses we all have a responsibility to take action to protect the health and biodiversity of oceans, including by taking urgent steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Marshall Islands therefore urges all states to step up efforts to effectively implement SDG 14 on sustainable oceans, which is paramount in protecting the cultural identity and economic stability of the island nations.

Nepal highlights that its constitution guarantees the right to a clean and healthy environment, demonstrating its commitment to environmental protection. The delegation asks insights from the Special Rapporteur on how to enhance stakeholder access and participation in ocean governance, recognising this as a critical component of protecting environmental rights.

Viet Nam emphasises the need for capacity-building and technology transfer to help developing nations implement sustainable ocean management practices. Viet Nam also calls for enhanced international legal frameworks to strengthen corporate responsibility, ensuring that businesses are held accountable for their environmental impact.

Saudi Arabia stresses that ocean protection must be integrated into broader sustainable development efforts, particularly within the SDGs and the UN climate framework. It points to weak management of plastic products as a major environmental issue that needs urgent attention. Additionally, it urges the international community to consider the financial risks of environmental policies on developing countries, particularly the risk of increased debt burdens.

Costa Rica reaffirms its commitment to environmental protection through the adoption of international conventions and efforts to develop legally binding instruments for climate action. However, it notes the challenges of incorporating human rights language into environmental regulations and requested guidance on how this could be effectively achieved.

Morocco highlights the vast significance of the ocean, covering 75% of the Earth's surface, and stressed the importance of balancing economic development with ocean conservation. The blue

economy is a strategic priority for Morocco, with significant investment in fish farming, supported by institutions such as the World Bank. Morocco has established a specialised fishing institute and launched the Atlantic Initiative to ensure the sustainable use of marine ecosystems. Additionally, in collaboration with UNESCO, Morocco has been actively working on scientific research and knowledge production to support evidence-based policymaking and the achievement of the SDGs.

Slovenia calls for immediate, ambitious, and coherent action to address the environmental crisis, emphasising the need to mainstream a human rights-based approach in climate governance. The delegation urges stronger integration of environmental rights into decision-making processes.

Despite being a landlocked country, **Switzerland** reaffirms its commitment to ocean sustainability through its national strategy for marine conservation. The delegation stresses the importance of integrating human rights into ocean-related policies and ensuring that global governance frameworks align with these principles. A key issue raised was seabed mining, with Switzerland expressing support for a moratorium until the full environmental risks are better understood. This position reflects growing concerns about the potential irreversible damage to marine ecosystems caused by deep-sea extraction.

Iraq presents its new national strategy (2015–2030), which prioritises renewable energy as a key component of marine biodiversity protection. The delegation calls for greater international support to implement these policies effectively and ensure long-term sustainability in the region.

Spain aligns itself with the EU's position on environmental protection and highlights its strong commitment to combatting illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, incorporating this effort into its broader diplomatic agenda. Additionally, Spain is actively working on a national convention to tackle plastic pollution and is investing in research on innovative solutions to regulate extractive fishing practices. These efforts aim to balance economic interests with long-term sustainability goals.

Mexico reaffirms its commitment to a human rights-based approach, ensuring that national policies and laws reflect this principle. The delegation highlights the precautionary principle as a fundamental guideline for environmental governance, advocating for measures that prioritise prevention over remediation. Mexico calls for the sharing of best practices and stronger legal frameworks to safeguard those advocating for climate justice.

Malawi highlights the increasing recognition of a human rights-based approach within the African Union (AU), reflecting a broader commitment to integrating human rights into environmental governance. It further stresses the need for cross-regional, local, and international dialogue to address climate challenges effectively and promote equitable solutions.

Despite being a landlocked nation, **Zambia** underscores its deep concern for the health of the world's oceans and their impact on global ecosystems. The delegation emphasises that pollution, overfishing, and climate change disproportionately affect marginalised communities, making it imperative to strengthen global frameworks that recognise relevant environmental and human rights; ensure stronger legal protections for ocean resources; and increase investment in



preventive measures in the most affected countries. Protecting the environment is ultimately about protecting human dignity.

The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** reaffirms its commitment to ocean protection through national laws and regulations and highlighted its participation in the Global Alliance for the Oceans. The delegation calls for greater regional and international cooperation and asks how can international cooperation be strengthened to effectively combat environmental challenges.

Iran expresses strong concerns about the failure of industrialised nations to meet their environmental responsibilities, highlighting the disproportionate burden placed on developing countries. Iran outlines national efforts to criminalise marine activities that cause environmental damage, reinforcing its commitment to legal accountability in environmental protection.

Djibouti acknowledges progress in global environmental action while warning that environmental degradation continues to worsen, exacerbating existing social and economic injustices. The delegation emphasises the concept of environmental injustice, where vulnerable communities bear the greatest burden of climate change and resource exploitation. With upcoming climate conferences, Djibouti asks which measures could be taken to strengthen governance and ensure a fairer distribution of environmental benefits.

Indonesia, situated between two oceans, emphasises the importance of Indigenous coastal communities in marine conservation. The delegation highlights that the country has 400,000 customary management areas, demonstrating the vital role of Indigenous-led Ocean governance.

South Africa expresses its support for the SR's report, stating that its national legal frameworks align with the recommendations. The delegation reaffirms the importance of legal accountability and policy coherence in protecting marine environments.

Chile underscores the role of Indigenous communities in ocean governance, noting that its geography, history, and culture are deeply tied to the sea. As a leader in the law of the sea and global marine governance, Chile reaffirms its commitment to advancing ocean protection. In 2024, Chile conducted Indigenous consultations in Rapa Nui, demonstrating its commitment to inclusive, participatory environmental policymaking. The delegation calls for cross-cutting action at all levels.

Samoa aligns itself with Palau's position, reaffirming its identity as a seafaring nation once known as the 'Navigator Islands.' Samoa is among 32 countries calling for a moratorium on deep-sea mining, reflecting concerns over the long-term environmental risks of seabed exploitation. Samoa also emphasises the importance of integrating modern science with traditional knowledge, ensuring a holistic national approach to marine conservation. With 80% of its population living in coastal areas, the delegation warns that the future of Samoa is at stake if urgent action is not taken.

Burkina Faso emphasises the crucial link between ocean protection and human rights, highlighting that safeguarding marine ecosystem directly benefits communities dependent on these resources. The country has ratified subsidies aimed at curbing undeclared and unregulated fishing, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable fishing practices. Furthermore, Burkina

Faso calls for urgent and coordinated global responses that integrate knowledge and expertise to address ocean-related challenges effectively.

Egypt underscores the ocean's role in absorbing significant quantities of emissions, making it a key factor in climate regulation. The Egyptian constitution recognises the right to a sustainable environment, and the government has implemented measures to uphold this commitment. Egypt has also developed a national plan to protect both tourism and the environment, alongside a strategy to implement the blue economy. The country reiterates the principle of common but differentiated responsibility as a crucial element in achieving climate justice.

Belgium highlights the significance of 2025 as a pivotal moment within the UN Decade of Action, stressing that it will be crucial for advancing efforts, particularly in the realm of global plastic regulation. The country calls for strengthened international collaboration to address plastic pollution and marine conservation.

Malaysia presents its national marine policy and development plan, reinforcing its commitment to marine sustainability. The country is dedicated to advancing the principles of a circular economy, which integrates environmental sustainability with economic progress. Malaysia emphasises that the ocean plays a critical role in balancing development and environmental conservation.

Togo raises concerns about ocean acidification and underscored the importance of increasing public awareness regarding marine environmental issues. The country references its national environmental policies, which are supported by legislative frameworks established in 2008 and 2009. Togo also emphasises the need to address the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, recognising its significant impact on marine ecosystems.

Ghana highlights that marine degradation disproportionately affects the most vulnerable populations. The country called attention to the relationship between land-based pollution and ocean health, stressing the urgent need to mitigate the adverse impacts of human activities on marine ecosystems.

Ecuador reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the Eastern Pacific Marine Corridor, an initiative aimed at preserving biodiversity and marine ecosystems. The country also plays a key role in negotiations on the global plastic pollution agreement. Additionally, Ecuador emphasises the importance of protecting socio-economic rights in the context of ocean conservation.

Brazil raises concerns regarding the implementation of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility in ocean governance, and it highlights the challenge of ensuring the fulfilment of international obligations and commitments while respecting this principle.

Eritrea underscores that its relationship with the ocean transcends geography, as marine resources are essential for life, health, and economic prosperity. The country acknowledges the ocean's crucial role in trade and commerce and emphasised the need for mechanisms to ensure the fulfilment of international obligations related to marine protection.

Oman reports the adoption of stringent legislation concerning the law of the sea and the protection of marine areas. The country has enacted measures to regulate the use of plastics and



protect marine resources, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable ocean governance.

Colombia highlights the disproportionate impact of ocean degradation on the Global South. As part of the East Pacific Tropical Corridor, the country is committed to strengthening governance and promoting sustainable tourism in marine areas. At the national level, Colombia prioritises access to water and the regulation of mangroves, recognising their critical role in fisheries management. Additionally, the country emphasises the importance of considering cultural connections to marine ecosystems in conservation efforts.

The **Russian Federation** expresses the view that the UNHRC does not possess the necessary mandate or expertise to hold dialogues on ocean-related issues. However, Russia acknowledges that the UNHRC plays a role in raising awareness and fostering international discussions on these matters.

China reaffirms its position as an active participant in global climate governance. The country ranks first in renewable energy use and remains committed to North-South collaboration in addressing environmental challenges. Furthermore, China emphasises its ongoing dedication to the carbon reduction code as part of its broader sustainability efforts.

Côte d'Ivoire aligns its ocean policies with those of the African Union (AU). Since adopting the Rio Declaration in 1992, the country has undertaken multiple commitments to marine sustainability. Moving forward, Côte d'Ivoire stresses the importance of further promoting the blue economy and strengthening maritime governance.

Cameroon underscores the significance of its national regulations in ensuring ocean sustainability. The country emphasises the importance of robust legal frameworks to protect marine environments and manage resources effectively.

The **Republic of Korea** highlights the ocean's role in climate regulation and as a vital resource for many communities. The country advocates for a human rights-based approach to ocean governance which should be systematically integrated into national maritime legal and policy frameworks. Additionally, collaboration with the private sector is a key factor in ensuring sustainable marine management.

Bangladesh calls for the implementation of legal measures to prevent the dumping of chemical waste into the ocean. It also stresses the need for stronger international regulations and enforcement mechanisms to mitigate marine pollution.

Reaffirming its commitment to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), **Greece** makes reference to a conference held in Athens last year which placed special emphasis on the role of women and youth in marine conservation. As an elected member of the UN Security Council, Greece is actively advocating for urgent international cooperation and peace-focused solutions to address ocean-related challenges.

Cuba warns of irreversible damage to marine ecosystems and expressed concern that global targets for ocean protection will not be met within the established timeframe. The country highlights the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, which disproportionately impact vulnerable nations. Cuba reaffirms that its constitution enshrines the

right to a healthy environment and expresses support for the SR's mandate on human rights and environmental protection.

Panama showcases its leadership in marine conservation, reporting that it has already protected 54% of its ocean territory. It expresses support for relevant international agreements, including the Memorandum of Understanding on ocean governance. Panama also emphasises the need for wider ratification of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Convention to enhance global marine protection efforts.

Senegal outlines its commitment to environmental rights, highlighting the constitutional amendment of 2016, which strengthens the original environmental protection provisions established in 2001. The country asks the SR on how environmental laws can be further strengthened to enhance ocean sustainability and governance.

Cambodia emphasises the need for transparency in ocean governance and fisheries management. It stresses the importance of promoting sustainable fisheries while balancing socio-economic development, recognising that marine resources are crucial to local livelihoods and economic stability.

Ethiopia underscores the impact of deep-seated structural inequalities on global progress toward ocean conservation and climate action. It criticises industrialised nations for not fulfilling their obligations and called for stronger adherence to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Ethiopia has adopted a national strategy focused on sustainability and has made investments in renewable energy. Highlighting financial gaps in climate action, Ethiopia urges greater international cooperation to address these disparities.

Ireland emphasises its role in ocean governance as an elected member of the International Seabed Authority's environmental committee. The country supports an intersectional approach to protecting environmental defenders and is committed to expanding marine protected areas. Ireland is actively working on the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and has pledged contributions to the Blue Action Fund. Ireland further asks how to encourage women's participation and ensure inclusivity in blue economy initiatives.

The **United Kingdom** reaffirms its commitment to ocean protection, emphasising the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as a fundamental legal framework. The UK chairs the Global Ocean Alliance and references a recent report on the Maldives, which highlights the need for international collaboration in ocean conservation. Additionally, the Foreign Minister has committed to engaging with the Global South to incorporate knowledge production and community-led initiatives into marine sustainability efforts.

Bahrain highlights its commitment to ocean protection through the implementation of national action plans. The country emphasises the role of new technologies in advancing marine conservation efforts and ensuring the sustainable use of ocean resources.

Georgia outlines its national environmental strategy, which prioritises the protection of marine ecosystems from source to sea while incorporating a human rights-based approach. The country expresses concern over the Russian occupation of certain areas, stating that this has prevented the Government from safeguarding coastal communities under its jurisdiction.



Tunisia reaffirms its commitment to regional and international agreements on ocean protection. It has intensified national efforts, including the establishment of the General Authority for Maritime Affairs in 2013, which coordinates with relevant agencies to safeguard marine resources and heritage. Tunisia's constitution enshrines the right to a healthy environment, and the country has pledged to combat marine pollution and environmental degradation to ensure a sustainable future for all.

Venezuela draws the UNHRC's attention to its domestic legal framework for marine conservation. It cites various programs, including the elimination of trawler fishing in its waters on March 14, 2009, as an example of a cross-cutting action to protect marine biodiversity.

The **Gambia** aligns its ocean policies with the African Union's agenda and has integrated climate adaptation into national planning. However, it notes significant challenges, particularly coastal erosion and marine pollution. The Gambia stresses that equitable access to technology and resources is essential for effective climate adaptation and ocean conservation.

Lesotho emphasises that ocean challenges are fundamentally human rights challenges, as all states rely on a healthy ocean for survival. Warning that the ocean is facing existential threats that are causing irreversible and intergenerational harm, Lesotho calls for holistic and transparent processes in addressing these issues and reaffirms its commitment to fulfilling SDG 14, which focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources.

Mauritius reports that rising sea levels have had a significant impact on the country, making ocean protection a central focus of its national agenda. In response, a Constitutional Review Commission is being established to formally enshrine the right to a healthy environment. Mauritius has signed the BBNJ Agreement and stressed the urgent need to curb greenhouse gas emissions to protect marine ecosystems.

Emphasising the need for states with experience and expertise in ocean management to be actively engaged in global conservation efforts, **Libya** condemns the Occupying Power in the Gaza Strip, aligning with concerns over the impact of conflict on human rights and environmental protection.

Thailand reaffirms the principle that the ocean is a common heritage of humankind and commends the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). It raises concerns about threats to ocean communities and the disruption of traditional maritime ways of life. Thailand also notes the complexities of economic growth, emphasizing the need to strike a balance between development and environmental protection while ensuring compliance with UN standards on business and human rights.

Germany poses a key question on how best to advance a human rights-based approach to ocean management and ensure its systematic integration into global frameworks.

Bolivia rejects the commodification of the ocean, asserting that it should not be treated as a mere economic resource. It calls for a break from colonial development models and emphasises the need for greater engagement with Indigenous communities in ocean governance. Bolivia also warns that the Global South remains vulnerable to resource exploitation by corporations driven by geopolitical interests.



Botswana stresses that ocean degradation impacts all living beings, including both animal and plant life. It underlines the need for new, innovative solutions to address these challenges as well as the formulation of domestic laws aimed at ensuring local engagement in ocean governance discussions.

Pakistan describes itself as highly vulnerable to climate change and reaffirms its longstanding commitment to environmental protection. The country's constitution recognizes the right to a healthy environment. Pakistan highlights the issue of climate injustice, arguing that structural inequalities disproportionately impact certain nations. Pakistan poses a key question on how to address this unequal and unjust situation at the global level.

Trinidad and Tobago emphasises its heavy dependence on the ocean, noting the severe effects of climate change on its coastal and marine ecosystems. The country has pursued national efforts to diversify its economy, investing in digital sectors, manufacturing, renewable energy, and infrastructure. Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago collaborates with the Commonwealth Blue Charter Finance Group, thereby underscoring the importance of international cooperation, capacity-building, and technical assistance in ensuring a human rights-based approach to ocean governance.

Armenia calls for an inclusive approach to future Conferences of the Parties (COPs) on climate and environmental issues. It looks forward to reaffirming its commitment at the upcoming Nice Summit. Armenia highlights the adverse impacts of environmental degradation on mountainous communities, thereby recalling the importance of international cooperation in water management. Additionally, the country emphasises the need to scale up best practices for sustainable resource management.

Jordan outlines its National Adaptation Plan to address climate change. Jordan emphasises that developing nations must be provided with the necessary resources to effectively implement climate resilience strategies and ocean protection measures.

Benin details its legislative efforts to ensure the sustainable management of its coastline and marine ecosystems. It has adopted a maritime code, a law on coastal zone protection, and regulations governing marine areas. Benin reaffirms its commitment to SDG 14, with a focus on combating coastal erosion, preserving water resources, and promoting sustainable development.

Dominica highlights its pioneering role in establishing the world's first marine protected area dedicated to the conservation of sperm whales. Dominica urges the international community to strengthen its commitment to marine conservation.

Kenya raises an important question on how a human rights-based approach can be effectively implemented to protect food security and cultural identity, particularly in coastal and ocean-dependent communities.

Timor-Leste references Article 6 of its national legal framework, which enshrines environmental protection as a state obligation. In 2023, it adopted a national policy aimed at addressing ocean-related challenges while supporting economic development through marine resources. Timor-

Leste emphasises that ocean conservation is the responsibility of all nations, not just those currently experiencing the most severe consequences of environmental degradation.

Sudan calls for better coordination in addressing environmental challenges across all dimensions. It stresses the need for a comprehensive and unified approach to tackling marine and climate-related issues at both the national and international levels.

India emphasises the need to consider the specific challenges faced by small-scale fisheries in ocean governance, and highlights its robust legal framework and the implementation of advanced technologies to monitor deep-sea ecosystems. India also stresses the importance of financial support for developing states to ensure the fulfilment of international commitments related to marine conservation.

Algeria calls for stronger measures to limit environmental damage caused by exploitative industries and stressed the need to support developing countries that bear the consequences. It asserts that developed nations have a responsibility to address these challenges. Algeria also condemns ongoing human rights violations in Gaza, calling for an immediate ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian aid and prevent further environmental destruction.

Honduras highlights its vulnerability to ocean-related environmental challenges, thereby reaffirming the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It calls for urgent action to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Honduras also emphasizes the critical role of Indigenous communities, traditional knowledge, and artisanal fishing in sustainable ocean management.

Views Expressed by intergovernmental Organizations

The **European Union (EU)** states that the alarming deterioration of ocean health is of a grave concern, as the preservation of Earth's delicate ecological balance depends on its vitality. The EU acknowledges the devastating cumulative impacts of the triple planetary crisis on the ocean, leading to further deterioration of marine ecosystems as well as adverse impacts on human rights that disproportionately affect women and indigenous peoples. The EU and its Member States remain deeply committed to advancing global partnerships and policies to protect and conserve the ocean. The EU emphasises the necessity of holistic, comprehensive approaches with human rights, gender responsiveness and ecosystem-based principles fully integrated. It strives to establish a cohesive strategic framework for ocean governance across all sectors. SDG 14 serves as the cornerstone of our ocean policy. The third UN Ocean Conference to take place in Nice, France in June 2025 will be a historic opportunity to reinforce global ocean governance and implement SDG 14.

UNDP is supporting efforts to uphold a human rights-based approach to oceans, including by placing the right to a healthy environment at the core of these efforts. Firstly, UNDP launched a practical tool for business on human rights due diligence and the environment, which incorporates the ocean as an environmental indicator for assessing business responses to human rights impacts. UNDP will integrate the tool into our Business and Human Rights Academy, which trains over 1,000 businesses each year. Secondly, through its Ocean Promise, UNDP will support the development of climate resilient blue economies in 100 coastal countries by 2030, helping to curtail the estimated \$1 trillion in annual losses from ocean mismanagement.

Finally, UNDP's Coral Reef Insurance Programme in Indonesia is protecting reefs and strengthening the financial resilience of reef-dependent communities and businesses. UNDP is also working with the Government of Indonesia to create a marine trust fund for sustainable marine financing. To conclude, based on UNDP's experience driving development solutions, UNDP echoes two recommendations from the SR's report. It is critical to conduct human rights impact assessments before approving activities that could harm oceans, and states and businesses should uphold their responsibility to promote and respect human rights in all ocean-related efforts. UNDP reiterates its continued support to all actors in advancing the HR2HE.

UNEP welcomes the SR's report which highlights the vulnerability of the ocean and human rights. The report emphasises the need for a holistic, gender-responsive and human rights-based approach that places the HR2HE at its core. We are facing a triple-planetary crisis compounded by weak governance, industrial fishing practises, insufficient support for small-scale fisheries, disorganised coastal urbanisation, and extractive industries. These factors exert a resilient pressure on our oceans, violating fundamental human rights. Indigenous Peoples, coastal communities, youth, children, women, and other marginalised groups are particularly affected by these violations. UNEP believes that a healthy and clean ocean is essential for upholding human rights related to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Further, a healthy ocean contributes to achieving the SDGs. Over the years, UNEP has developed publications and resources aimed at promoting the HR2HE in the context of the ocean. Recognising the significance of the ocean and the protection of human rights, UNEP remains committed to advancing the HR2HE and is dedicated to collaborating with all stakeholders in advancing this cause. Once again, UNEP reiterates its full support for the SR's mandate, and looks forward to future collaboration.

Thanking the SR for the report, the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** is gravely concerned at the threat to the ocean affecting marine biodiversity and the subsistence of millions of persons. The OIC recognises that humanity, by its negligence and by its actions, is responsible for this damage to vital ecosystems. The OIC reaffirms its commitment to environmental justice, sustainable development and international solidarity, in line with the Islamic values of preserving creation and collective responsibility. The OIC fully supports the recommendations outlined in the report, which seek to step up international cooperation and promote tangible actions to preserve our oceans. The OIC also calls for greater cooperation to support the most vulnerable countries to address environmental challenges. It encourages all states to adopt effective policies to protect our oceans and ensure a sustainable future for the coming generations.

The **Sovereign Order of Malta** stresses its active support for communities affected by environmental degradation, providing both emergency relief and long-term adaptation projects. The Sovereign Order further recalls the importance of restoring coastal ecosystems, particularly through initiatives such as mangrove restoration, which plays a vital role in mitigating coastal erosion, enhancing biodiversity, and strengthening climate resilience.

Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions

The **National Human Rights Commission of India** explains that the Constitution of India enshrines the fundamental rights to life, which includes the right to a clean and healthy environment. Therefore, India is duty-bound to protect this right by taking plausible measures. In



2022, the Transparency Commission of India has issued an advisory to address the environmental pollution impact on the human rights, focussing on five key areas, namely punishing polluters, reducing vehicular pollution, transferring environmental law approvals, promoting cost-effective pollution prevention measures, strengthening local bodies' capacity. The efforts have been taken by the respective states for the implementation thereof. On verifiable records, the Commission is observed that 8,916 cases related to environmental degradation have been initiated both by complainants and show motivators, and necessary instructions have been issued to the authorities concerned to take appropriate measures in greater interest of the human rights, more particularly of vulnerable populations. Therefore, there is an active participation of National Human Rights Commission of India, with a commitment to provide a good environment to the citizens to protect the constitutional philosophy as mentioned above.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

Earthjustice thanks the SR for her report highlighting how the ocean's degradation is affecting the enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, to life, to health, to culture and to education. The report and its annex clearly show how the ocean is one biome, encompassing multiple ecosystems providing interconnected habitats for marine and human life. Therefore, a global action is needed to end one of the major drivers of this degradation, overfishing, and its harmful effects on human rights. And this, by ending harmful fisheries practise, harmful fishing subsidies, and by expanding the global network of marine protected areas. Overfishing results in the depletion of harvestable fish stocks, leading to reduced food sources and employment opportunities for the billions of people worldwide who depend on marine resources. It disproportionately impacts small-scale and artisanal fishing communities, especially those in low-income countries. Furthermore, it is aggravated by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (in short, IUU fishing), happening outside of the fisheries management legal framework and accounting for roughly 20% of global fish catches. Such IUU fishing is also associated with high rates of forced labour, human trafficking, unsafe working conditions and other violations of basic human rights. Eliminating overfishing would be an enormous step forward in promoting and protecting the rights of billions of people who value and depend on marine environments.

Franciscans International welcomes the SR's report and support its recommendations on the critical importance of comprehensive environmental and human rights impact assessments of energy projects that might harm the ocean or coastal areas, such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects. LNG, seen as a bridge fuel in the transition to cleaner energy due to its lower carbon emissions profile, poses several human rights and environmental challenges. Methane, which leaks across the entire gas value chain, is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in triggering atmospheric warming. Franciscans International is concerned about the impacts of an extensive build-up of LNG projects in the Verde Island Passage Philippines, one of the planet's most critical marine biodiversity hotspots, vital to global climate mitigation efforts. The projects contribute to the degradation of coral and marine ecosystems, including to increased shipping traffic and pollution of coastal areas. An oil spill in Oriental Mindoro in 2023 destroyed 20,000 hectares of coral reefs and endangered the livelihoods, health and food security of over 200,000 people. It is critical that as more and more states adopt LNG as a bridging fuel, robust environmental and human rights impact assessments are mandatorily conducted. Assessments must take into

account the full spectrum of potential harms stemming from this energy source. Fragile marine ecosystems, such as the Verde Island Passage, that are important in and of themselves as marine biodiversity hotspots, as well as for their significance for carbon storage and combating climate change, should be made off-limits for commercial exploitation and declared as marine protected areas.

Welcoming the SR's thematic report, the **Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL)** stresses that offshore oil and gas activity poses a serious threat to Indigenous Peoples and communities. As the report lays out, we cannot continue our reliance on offshore oil and gas, given its significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and its harm to the marine environment. Every phase of the offshore oil and gas life cycle presents unique ecological and human rights risks, from exploration and drilling, to the processing and transport of oil and gas, to the improper enclosure and abandonment of wells. CIEL welcomes the report's recommendations that states halt new offshore oil and gas projects that do not have comprehensive environmental, human rights and climate assessments as a prerequisite to any decision-making process. CIEL echoes the call for states to consider energy alternatives and the advancement of effective, just transition towards a net-zero emission economy, consistent with international commitments while respecting human rights. In the face of the triple climate crisis, we must prioritise the human rights of current and future generations by transitioning to renewable energy sources that do not compromise the integrity of our ecosystem and shared resources.

Friends World Committee for Consultation thanks the SR for her report emphasising our collective responsibility to protect the ocean on which the lives of all species depend. The right to a healthy environment relies on ocean health and conservation. The ocean has stored more than 90 percent of the heat from human-caused climate change and one-third of the world's carbon emissions. It therefore highlights the report's profound concern over rising political interest in speculative, high-risk and unproven-to-scale marine geoengineering technologies. They do not address unsustainable energy, agriculture and economic systems driving climate change. Instead, these technologies delay real mitigation of root causes while increasing dangerous risks of a marine ecosystem collapse. The Committee reminds the UNHRC that high carbon dioxide concentrations led to the last great marine extinction 252 million years ago. We cannot knowingly repeat this collapse. The Committee upholds the report's call that immediate action is essential to phase out fossil fuel reliance, protect vulnerable habitats and align ocean activities with sustainable climate and biodiversity targets. The ocean is already under profound stress from heating and plastic pollution. We must promote sustainable ocean practises to prevent further severe and irreversible damage. Guided by the values of sustainability and simplicity, the Committee calls on all states to uphold the right to a healthy environment by honouring the natural world and enabling harmony with the incredible biodiversity of this planet.

FIAN International welcomes the SR's report on the intrinsic relationship between the ocean and human rights. These ecosystems are vital for many families which depend on artisanal fishing, a vital activity for the right to food. The state must implement standards that guarantee the protection of marine ecosystems. Fishing and peasant communities must actively participate in environmental management and be able to strengthen their capacities. All of these actions must be based on human rights, guaranteeing access to natural and productive assets. This implies a



global commitment to stop the exploitation of hydrocarbons. FIAN International condemns the continuation of oil and gas exploration projects in the Honduran Mosquitia. These jeopardise the fundamental rights of communities in 25 municipalities. FIAN International urges states to move forward urgently in negotiating a legally binding instrument on transnational corporations to regulate their activities, oblige them to respect the precautionary principle, and hold them legally accountable for the destruction and contamination of ecosystems and human rights violations.

Green and Better World emphasises the crucial role that human rights defenders and environmental activists play in protecting the environment. However, they often face harassment, intimidation, and reprisal for their work. Green and Better World deeply regrets the persisting trend, particularly evident during COP summits, whereas countries frequently target outspoken activists, journalists, and human rights defenders. Unfortunately, COP29 Baku was no exception, as it exemplified the practise of silencing environmental activists before, during, and after the event. Nearly a year ago, the way of repression after COP29 began with the arrest of Mr. Anar Mammadli, head of the Justice for Climate initiative. Today, yet another member of the initiative, Mr. Bashir Suleimani, has been detained for his work. Furthermore, three Azerbaijani activists were also arrested today as part of the ongoing crackdown on civil society environmental voices. These actions violate human rights and compromise the global climate negotiations. The international community must hold Azerbaijan accountable and protect human rights defenders and activists worldwide.

The **Chinese Association for International Understanding** reaffirms that the HR2HE is not a privilege, but a universal human right. More than 90% of the global population now breathes polluted air. The crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and has put intensified pressure on oceans, disproportionately affecting the poor women and marginalised communities. For the first time, when the World Economic Forum released its global risk report, there is a chapter on pollution. Therefore, organisations need to work tirelessly to amplify the voices of those who are mostly affected by environmental harms. We also need to convey to the international community the voice of calling for the realisation of the harmony between human beings and nature. However, we cannot do this alone. It urges governments to prioritise environmental justice and eco-environmental protection in their agendas, businesses to adopt the sustainable practise, and the UNHRC to hold all stakeholders accountable. Together, we can turn the tide against the challenge for the ocean and human rights and the climate change. So as to ensure a cleaner, safer, and more just world for all.

Iuventum e.V. commends the SR's report on the ocean and human rights, and appreciates the comprehensive coverage and reference to nuclear contamination, thereby expressing hope that all the recommendations will be implemented. In Fukushima, the discharge of modified meltdown extract started and will last for another 60 years. Massive radioactive surface soil in Fukushima may be dispersed all over Japan for use in public projects. The contaminators practise solution to pollution is dilution. 25,000 residents are still displaced and mistreated. The top executives of TEPCO are enjoying impunity given by the Supreme Court of Japan. Since 1979, one nuclear reactor has melted down every nine years. Food contamination by Cesium-137 has a half-life of 30 years. Environmental due diligence is a fiction in the nuclear industry. Disaster response is a bad reflex. Nuclear plants are vulnerable. The precarious Zaporizhzhia plant avoids accidents through heroic effort while providing no civilian electricity. Humanity is capable of



developing technology to generate safe and clean electricity. The nuclear power is too risky and irresponsible.

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) welcomes the report and agrees that the traditional rights of fishers must be protected. In Guatemala, generations have lived from fishing, but the various enterprises have left chemical residues in the seas, contaminating and harming the fish. The prawn industry has damaged mangroves and introduced a parasite. Monocultures are damaging national artisanal wealth. Fishers have difficulty in finding ways to earn our livelihood. The Government is trying to pass a law on water without consulting the fisher communities, which will be a benefit to the corporations. Fisherfolk who try to defend their rights have been charged with criminal offences. ISHR calls on Guatemala to adopt a law on biodiversity and ancestral knowledge; to include the communities in discussions on the law on water and protect artisanal fishing; to carry out environmental impact studies; to examine the consequences of business activities and repair damage; and to end the bullying and criminalisation of fisherfolk defending their rights.

Peace Brigades International explains that in Colombia there are still serious humanitarian crises affecting Afro-descendant, Indigenous and peasant communities, many in the Colombian Pacific area. Their cosmovision and practises, like fishing, are threatened by armed groups fighting over the land in a context of national and foreign investment. Buenaventura is an example. It is the most violent city of the country, and the inhabitants are suffering constant human rights violations, as well as inequality and structural racism. Estera de San Antonio is thought to be the place where a thousand disappeared persons' bodies are hidden, is a symbolic place. Women continue to practise their ancestral practises. The state is calling for it to be a monument to memory. Bahía Málaga is another example. There are touristic projects which threaten the subsistence of Afro-descendants who for decades have lived there. They are suffering violence from armed groups that seek to displace them. We must protect these ecosystems and recognise and strengthen the cosmovision and ancestral practises that protect the environment. If there is no land, there is no life.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

79 State Delegations

5 Inter-Governmental Organizations

1 National Human Rights Institution

10 Non-Governmental Organizations