

# UNCTAD15 pre-event: Harnessing the benefits of the ocean economy for sustainable development

9<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Statements by UNCTAD's SG, Keynote speaker and panellists

Disclaimer: -Check content against delivery-

## Programme

Mrs. Isabelle Durant, Secretary-General a.i., UNCTAD.....	1
Hon. Kirk D. M. Humphrey, M.P. Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Barbados.....	3
Dr. Filimon Manoni, Deputy Secretary General, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat .....	9
H. E. Stephen Fevrier, Ambassador, OECS Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva.....	9
H. E. Michael Gaffey, Ambassador, Ireland Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva.....	11
H.E. U. Dwarka-Canabady, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations in Geneva.....	15
Ms. Aimee Gonzales, Executive Director, Partnerships in Environmental Management of the Seas (PEMSEA).....	17
Mr. Awani Behnam, Honorary President of the International Oceans Institute.....	18

Mrs. Isabelle Durant, Secretary-General a.i., UNCTAD

Welcome **Hon. Kirk D. M. Humphrey, M.P. Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Barbados**, our host to the UNCTAD 15 Conference. Welcome **H.E. Rui Macieira, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Portugal before the United Nations and our Chair today**. Portugal is co-convening to the 2<sup>nd</sup> United Nations Oceans Conference to be held in New York in June 2020.

Ambassadors, distinguish panellists, and participants, it is a pleasure to welcome you all at this High-level panel discussion on the Ocean Economy for Sustainable Development, on the road to UNCTAD 15 and on the occasion of the World Oceans Day.

**Key messages:**

- The ocean covers 70% of the surface of our planet and its health and the sustainable use of its many resources is critical to humanity in many ways. **The ocean connects us, with over 80% of the volume of world trade carried by sea, and it enables many economic activities that support livelihoods and allow societies to prosper.** A sustainable and resilient ocean economy is vital for achieving the policy objectives set out in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, as well as other international agreements, including the SAMOA Pathway, Paris Agreement, the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Sendai Framework. But there are many challenges to face, including marine pollution, climate change and access and benefit sharing of marine resources.
- UNCTAD estimates that the value of the “ocean” economy in the form of **tradable oceans good and services contributes directly at least \$2.5 trillion per year, but its real value, while difficult to quantify, is much larger** (UNCTAD 2021). For example, **oceans assets, marine resources and marine ecosystems services have been estimated conservatively to be at least UD\$24 trillion** showing the massive contribution of oceans to sustain life and economic activities (WWF 2015). Even this figure does not take into account the overall value of coastal and marine resources as a whole, including in terms of **global value chains, socio-economic benefits and important indirect benefits** - such as those provided by seagrasses and mangroves in protecting coastal assets from erosion and flooding.
- **The role of maritime transport in facilitating global trade, too, is much larger than its export value alone. Shipping and ports are gateways to global trade and provide critical access to ocean economy activities such as fisheries, tourism and offshore energy. SIDS and other island nations are especially dependent on seaports,** including for food and energy, as well as in the context of disaster risk management and response. Therefore, ensuring **the sustainability of maritime transport and the climate-resilience of ports and other critical assets on which ocean economy activities depend, is key to harnessing the benefits of the ocean economy for sustainable development** (UNCTAD 2020 MYEM).
- The ocean economy, and notably shipping, also has an important role to play when it comes to mitigating climate change. UNCTAD fully supports international endeavors that aim at decarbonizing shipping. Maritime transport should not remain outside the ambitions of the Paris agreement
- The **COVID-19 pandemic has generated unprecedented impacts** on the global economy and has sensitized the world to our **shared fragility and the importance of preserving and managing wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystems in a sustainable way.** It has also served as a **reminder of the importance of well-functioning global supply chains** that rely heavily on maritime transportation networks and the important economic knock-on effects which result from disruptions and delays.
- Because of the measures taken to address the pandemic, **trade in goods dropped by about 6 % while trade in services fell by 16 % in 2020 (UNCTAD 2021).** In the oceans economy these impacts while showing a similar downwards trend have been uneven.

Trade in certain oceans based goods such as **tuna and tuna products exports have shown a certain level of resilience (UNCTAD and INFOFISH 2021)**, while coastal and marine tourism has dropped about 70 %, with sub sectors such as cruise tourism completely on halt (UNWTO. 2020). Global port calls declined by 10 % in 2020 while maritime trade flows contracted. **But this is not the end of the story. Recovery appears to be on track. In Q1 2021, the value of global trade in goods and services grew by about 4 % quarter-over-quarter and by about 10 % year-over-year (UNCTAD 2021)**. A recovery is also underway across the maritime transport sector, albeit still fraught with uncertainty and progressing at different speeds across regions and shipping market segments. Closely linked to production and consumption patterns, and to developments in consumer habits, including online shopping and e-commerce, containerized trade has been showing more resilience.

- Today's event is **about how to harness the oceans economy to sustainable development and the role that UNCTAD can play to address the socio-economic and environmental challenges that coastal developing countries face and enable blue COVID-19 recovery strategies**. Key issues for consideration have been highlighted on the UNCTAD meetings page for today's event and to start the discussion. They include challenges and opportunities related to:
  - Sustainable trade in ocean-based goods and services
  - Fisheries and aquaculture
  - Sustainable maritime transport, connectivity, and climate resilient ports
  - Sustainable tourism and
  - Sustainable offshore energy
  
- This event provides **a unique opportunity to focus on some of these and help identify priority areas** where accelerated policy action is needed and UNCTAD's work can make an important contribution going forward. We hope today's discussion will inform the preparatory processes of the **UNCTAD 15 Conference to be hosted by Barbados, and the 2nd UN Ocean Conference in 2021, convened by Portugal and Kenya**. On this note, I welcome and invite all panelists and stakeholders **to come on board, provide you deep insights, engage and participate**.

Hon. Kirk D. M. Humphrey, M.P. Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy,  
Barbados

I greet you on behalf of the honourable Prime Minister of Barbados and the people of Barbados as we build momentum on the road to UNCTAD 15, hosted by Barbados under the theme ***"From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all"***.

I start with what I hope will give a little bit of Barbadian inspiration, to those of us who occupy this space and are therefore charged with attending to the affairs of the ocean.

I am also inclined to make a confession on this Caribbean morning, a behaviour many may think strange, for a person involved in politics. But for the work that lays ahead of us, honesty is the best policy.

The inspiration I wish to share comes from one of my country's literary icons - Frank Collymore. In a piece aptly entitled "Hymn to the Sea." He wrote:

"Like all who live on small islands<sup>[L  
SEP]</sup>

I must always be remembering the sea.

**Being** always cognizant of her presence;

**Viewing** Her through apertures in the foliage;

**Hearing** when the wind is from the south,

Her music,

and smelling.

The warm rankness of her,

**Tasting** and feeling her kisses on bright sun-bathed days,

I must always be remembering the sea..... "

As for the confession, well, I have dreamt of being a poet, so that perhaps I could begin to capture the Ocean, the giver of life, in a way similar to Frank Collymore.

But were I a poet of any note, what story would I tell now? What overriding emotion would fuel my words, what imagery would I be able to craft and give to you. Could I command you with my words to search your soul to determine if we are doing our best? Being our best?

For a Caribbean man in search of a muse, there is no better inspiration than the sea. For the story of the Caribbean, for both good and bad, is a story, of the power of the sea.

Our original settlers, the Amerindians, arrived, after rowing their way up South America's Orinoco river, which empties out into the Caribbean Sea.

Then came Europeans, crossing the Atlantic and creating colonies across the Western Hemisphere.

Colonization paved the way for the arrival, via ocean, of Africans against their will, who endured some of the worst conditions in the history of mankind, followed by Indentured Indians and Chinese,.

These harsh conditions continued well into the 20th century and compelled 100s of 1000s to migrate, this time via steam powered ships, to Panama, Brazil, North America and Europe.

Even now, when the sky has taken over from the seas, as the main method to move our people across the globe, being on a small island, means that the sea still brings us our food, our energy, the things we trade and much more.

It is the Ocean's balance, however, that most appeals to me. Even in the midst of hardship, my ancestors paid homage to the ocean, that gave food, and water and respite. It gave LIFE to the people who went before me, and history is told of the many songs, sung by the ocean when a struggling Caribbean people remembered, a good life gone or dreamt of a better day to come.

**“Like all who live on small islands, I must always be remembering the sea”**

**I begin this way** only to convey a sense of what the ocean means to me, not as Minister of government but as a man whose life force is tied directly to the sea.

**I begin this way** to remind you of the greatest truth that, there is no more symbolic, yet real and tangible connector between all nations and **ALL** people on this planet than the ocean.

We can debate religion (though we probably should not), arts and culture, all kinds of human achievement but there should be no debating the importance of safeguarding our oceans. For it is the ocean that makes us viable, as a species and is the eternal thread that binds us.

Our ancestors paid homage to the ocean in the worst of times, and so must we in these times of trouble.

Let me share my thoughts around 4 questions.

**ONE: “Why is a Sustainable Ocean Economy important for SIDS and coastal Developing countries”** in answering this my mind goes to the thoughts above first, but I share with you a few other reasons.

1. Our Ocean space is 424 times the size of our land space. There is much opportunity there and more in our Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
2. A sustainable ocean economy has the potential to transform the lives of communities. Via development of non-extractive industries that provide higher value-added opportunities. Studies in Barbados have shown the value of keeping a turtle alive or a fish alive and the long-term value that can bring. That is why the idea of protecting 30% of the ocean resonates so strongly with me. In so doing however, we have to ensure the benefits outweigh the opportunity costs or that we can offer some form of compensation or alternative livelihood to the people who may suffer losses while we protect that space. We also have to constantly communicate with our partners. We have to make a strong case that the existence values or the bequest values are more than the extractive values. The Ocean is valuable in itself. Safeguarding it, for future generations is valuable in itself. And that even in cases where we must extract then there's still 70% of the ocean left and even then, it has to be in a sustainable way.
3. Ecological economics: In these times, it is critical to acknowledge and preserve the assets upon which the income flows depend. It simply makes sense and for tourism-based economies a lot all depends on the ocean.
4. This point also ties to two above. Our economic well-being is dependent on the ocean, if the assets of the ocean are destroyed there will be significant welfare losses especially for the most vulnerable.

5. Many SDGs are addressed via a sustainable blue economy strategy:  
SDGs, 1 – No poverty, 2 – Zero hunger, 3, Clean water and sanitation, 7 – Affordable and clean energy, 8 – Decent work and economic growth, 13 – Climate action and 14 – Life below water. If we are serious about the SDGs we must be serious about the Ocean
6. We are certain recipients of the Ocean’s discontent, though we were innocent in its offence.

Caribbean nations are grappling with rising sea levels, declining fish catches, dying corals and more. We are facing more violent and virulent hurricanes every year, Sargassum seaweed is covering our beaches and affects everything else that we do. All of us are investing in mitigation and some adaptation but I do not think we can ban enough petroleum based single used plastics to make a difference to what we face. Developed nations of the world must open their eyes to what we are, Open their understanding and recognize that we are not responsible for the wolf at our door, open their heavily loaded arsenal to the various tools that we need to get through this difficult moment and finally open their clenched fists to hold the hand of the developing nations of the world who must stand on shaky ground or swim in murky waters.

It is for these reasons and more that we need a Sustainable Ocean Economy important for SIDS and coastal Developing countries

**TWO: What has been the experience of Barbados in creating a Ministry on Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy?**

Even before COVID-19, Barbados was going through a significant national transformation. Led by Prime Minister Mia Mottley.

A major focus for our island, in this age of global warming and mega-hurricanes, was to become much more ocean and climate conscious and resilient. This is a large part why our government created the region’s first Blue Economy Ministry - which I am so honoured to lead.

Our efforts must be to protect our blue economy space at all cost. The idea that we must preserve our ocean space, find sustainable ways to ensure production in this space and make sure everything redound to the benefit of people is what we seek to do. **Preserve, Produce for People.** The **three Ps** that should define all small Island developing states, with a view on the world as Big Ocean Developing states who cater to Big Ocean People.

As I said before our geographical position locates us in the immediate vicinity of the most devastating results of the global climate change crisis.

However, while the oceans bring danger, they also bring opportunity, if we seek to understand them.

That is why we are working with our partners to get a better understanding of the science in being strategic in our plans.

I want to thank the **UNDP** for working with us on the Blue Scoping Study, The **IDB** on the Strategic Roadmap and our National Coastal Risk Information Platform, The **FAO** on the many things we are doing in fisheries, the **IMO** for the guidance we are receiving and I am thankful that Cabinet has recently approved the paper that would allow us to integrate Marpol Annex 6 in our legislation that reduces air pollution by ships.

I want also to thank **The Nature Conservancy** for agreeing to help with the Marine Spatial Plan for Barbados and most recently, I want to thank the **Commonwealth Secretariat and the Republic of Seychelles** for allowing us to Co- Lead the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Marine Protected Areas. The idea of preservation is essential to us from all that we are doing.

At the same time, the Caribbean Region's largest resource base is its coastal and marine asset, with a World Bank report estimating that the oceans contributed over US\$400 billion to the Caribbean blue economy.

It is because of this duality, that we have set about an ambitious and unambiguous plan to establish our island as a global hub for climate resilience and ocean innovation.

Our vision is to sustainably leverage the ocean as a natural resource and provide the required supportive policy, developmental and physical infrastructure, to stimulate economic growth and better protection of coastal environments and marine life.

Barbados is ready to be a campus and hub for the world's leading funds, researchers, scientists, designers, technologists, media entities and entrepreneurs focused on ocean innovation. We are ready to position the island as a global platform for sustainable projects, policies, innovations and solutions that need to be scaled and distributed globally.

Barbados is open for sustainable Ocean business. We are excited about exploring partnerships with likeminded governments, multi-lateral organizations, NGOs and private sector entities to make our oceans safer and an even greater contribution to our lives.

### **THREE: How can the sustainable development of the Oceans Economy be strengthened as part of Post COVID-19 recovery and redevelopment?**

It is clear to me that a monoculture does not work. Whether it be sugar, manufacturing or tourism. This approach has failed the region. We need development on various planks.

In this vein, we must build out our Ocean economy as a fundamental plank of economic diversification. For example two days ago, we welcomed back cruise to the region, the first cruise ship in the western Hemisphere for over 15 months.

**But now** we must see this opportunity differently and look at the ocean as a platform for a new wave of jobs and business opportunities, ocean food, ocean logistics and transportation. Economies of scale dictate that we will not compete on mass, but we must compete in efficiency, flexibility and innovation.

Here are a few thoughts most of which I do not have time to expand but many of which are repeated in many places.

1. All Small Island Developing states or Big Ocean Developing states need **the correct policy environment and the correct infrastructure** that will ensure a sustainable blue

economy. This comes at a cost and we must therefore prioritise Blue economy investment.

2. We **must improve the business environment** and make it easier to do business. That is why Barbados is working assiduously to improve its trade across borders.
3. **Strengthen our Institutions:** The importance of evidence-based decision-making cannot be understated as a necessary shift to ensure the success of the blue economy strategy. In many SIDS the areas responsible for the traditional Blue economy sector are the last to modernize. We also need to enhance the regulatory environment's capacity to develop and implement viable projects. This includes a recognition of the role of the development community, private sector and civil society
4. **Focus on Resources:** new and innovative forms of financing or leveraging the private sector will be necessary to facilitate the operationalization of a blue economy strategy. Physical capital development will also need to be accompanied by investments in human capital that will enable skills and competencies that are responsive to the needs of the blue economy, new technologies and innovation. In the case of Barbados, a debt swap did not work, and we found ourselves lost in the lonely middle: too rich to be poor and too poor to be rich.
5. **Inclusivity:** The blue economy concept also posits inclusiveness as one of its core ideals, but there are often challenges associated with efforts to formalize certain informal industries (e.g., small-scale fisheries) and spread the benefits of growth across different socioeconomic groups. Additionally, the introduction of larger private sector firms into some predominantly informal sectors such as fishing and marine tourism (private boat operators) may lead to a 'crowding-out' of vulnerable populations who engage in these activities. As such, the strategy needs to identify disadvantaged groups and seek to promote a more inclusive approach to development.
6. **Regional Integration:** An integrated and cohesive policy accepted and promoted regionally, which supports the development of a blue economy strategy is necessary to ensure success.

#### **FOUR: What will be the key messages of Barbados as the host of the UNCTAD 15 Conference on Sustainable Ocean Economy?**

I think the Conference theme exposes the underlying message that must be conveyed to the world. That to move "*From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all*" that everyone must be involved and play their part.

It also hints at a call to action to all to do better for those countries in need of assistance.

At every stage it is stated and I quote that "the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development presents an opportunity for the development community to align the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development with the global "new normal" created by the COVID-19 pandemic."

I think it will be essential that we speak directly to the compounding of the many issues that were facing developing countries that are deepened by the pandemic.

As stated Unctad 15 promises to address “the massive unmet trade, finance, investment and technology needs of developing countries struggling in the face of the COVID-19 challenge.

As host, Barbados will continue with the fearless and visionary leadership in Prime Minister Mottley that has on several occasions sought to lay bare the idea that SIDS are invisible and dispensable.

But we do so with a sense of hope and a strong faith the pandemic has left us understanding that we need each other now more than ever. Recognizing that we are connected at the core much like the way the ocean connects us.

This pandemic reminds us that to leave one person behind is to put at risk all the gains we have made in the last century. I hope that we have learnt that we can even reap more gains if we adopt an approach that seeks to maximize and explore the individual and collective resources of the small islands everywhere.

If I were a poet, as I began, I would wish to capture this moment in a verse equal to the many that have immortalized the names of heroes and heroines everywhere.

I would hope to capture that this is the moment the world stood up and conclude, not only for small nations, but for all nations

“Like all who live .... I must always be remembering the sea.”

**Thank you and good luck with your deliberations.**

Dr. Filimon Manoni, Deputy Secretary General, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

No speaker notes. Please refer to the [PIFS video](#) provided.

H. E. Stephen Fevrier, Ambassador, OECS Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva

Permit me to also thank Minister Humphrey for his *tour de force* on the reasons why we must preserve the oceans. Let me also thank him for a strong call for inter-generational equity, and for reminding us of the intrinsic value of the oceans. As a Caribbean man myself, permit me to align myself with those inspirational words of the Honourable Minister.

This year’s theme for World Oceans Day: '**The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods**' is particularly timely for small island developing states. Today’s commemoration, like most other **international observances** will take place through virtual means as a consequence of the pandemic. It is worth acknowledging that the pandemic has had **a most profound** impact on our collective relationship with the Oceans. This is fundamentally the case for small island developing states.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, the dramatic global economic slowdown caused by COVID-19 had a significant impact not only on jobs, economies and governments, but also on terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

In the short run, the **impacts** of the pandemic on the health of the ocean have largely been positive due to the reduction in various sectoral pressures that lead to pollution, overfishing, habitat loss, **invasive species introductions** and the impacts of climate change on the ocean.

While the ocean may enjoy some near-term benefits, the livelihoods and food-security **of tens or even hundreds of millions** of people have been seriously affected. Indeed, in much of the Caribbean, in the early phase of the crisis, those coastal communities that relied on the sea for income and livelihoods were severely impacted.

Indeed, during the shutdowns, **significant slowdowns** were registered in the major economic sectors of: fisheries, shipping, coastal and cruise tourism as well as yachting and the ancillary services that support these sectors.

In an informal poll conducted by the Economist magazine, participants ranked the following ocean sectors as impacted most by COVID-19: **tourism 70.7 percent, fisheries 10.4 percent, offshore oil and gas 7.2 percent, shipping 6.2 percent, offshore renewables 2.9 percent and aquaculture 2.6 percent.**

As is evident from recent trade and economic data, the recovery of those sectors and forward guidance from corporates paint a picture of a strong recovery. A recovery that at once will: reverse some of the ecological gains made through lower emissions and utilization of fragile marine ecosystems; and equally, return jobs and livelihoods to those affected by the crisis.

This brings us back to the theme of this year's observance: 'The **Ocean: Life and Livelihoods**'. Or, with some license, perhaps we can rephrase the theme to: how can the two – life and livelihoods effectively and meaningfully coexist'.

Allow me to offer two reflections on how we can contribute to this objective.

As you would doubtlessly know, the WTO Membership is working on **binding disciplines** to restrain the worse impulses of WTO Member States related to the 40 billion dollars in subsidies provided to the fisheries sector. These subsidies have incentivized and made commercially viable, certain fisheries and fishing practices that undermine global stocks.

The proposed agreement will limit the ability of national authorities to provide subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity and prohibited those that support IUU fishing. In the spirit of this year's theme, **of life and livelihoods**, OECS Member States continue to **press for an agreement that would target** those members and operators that have the most damaging and pernicious impact on stocks and their underlying ecosystems.

Let me be **equally** clear, we do not believe that the support programs in small island developing states that have no systemic impact on stocks should be targeted.

So, while the temporary **RE-SPITE** from unsustainable economic activity in the marine sector brought about by the pandemic, **is likely to come to an end**, there are steps we can take to restrain the worse and most dangerous commercial impulses. This includes a strong outcome in the context of the negotiations of fisheries subsidies.

**The second reflection** that I would like to share in closing relates to the future of our economic relationship with the ocean.

More concretely, how can our development and investment thesis evolve to keep pace with our desire to sustainably co-exist with the ocean.

In other words, how can we sustainably harness the economic potential of our vast oceans resources **while at once** securing its future sustainability.

Sustainable finance refers to any form of financial service integrating environmental, social governance (ESG) criteria into the business or investment decisions.

Consumers and financial markets may already be ahead of policy makers in this regard. Efforts at ensuring that corporates respond to Environmental and social governance issues has become a central and catalyzing force in public markets and the choices that consumers make.

Take for example, sustainability labels and marks of good housekeeping related to fisheries and other marine activities have become a key driver of consumer demand.

More broadly, sustainable finance, includes **sustainable funds, green bonds, impact investing, microfinance, green trade finance and sustainability-linked guarantees.**

Hence the entire financial system is moving in the direction of sustainability.

For example, at the start of 2018, global sustainable investment assets reached \$31 trillion, a **34% increase** from 2016. This figure has of course increased through the pandemic.

While this total pool of investment is not dis-aggregated to account for ocean-based sustainability investment, it is clear that the trend **in all sectors is** tracking towards sustainability.

#### **What does this mean for us as policy makers?**

The OECS has started to now mainstream sustainability into its programmatic sector development work, including in the oceans.

In this view, the OECS along with UNCTAD and CITES are implementing a blue bio-trade project. This project will seek to sustainably harness marine resources based on sustainability criteria.

So in closing, going forward, it is important to take positives steps to conclude the WTO fisheries subsidies agreement and also ensure that development of our marine sectors are incentivized by sustainable finance and developed based on effective sustainability criteria.

UNCTAD XV is a good target to renew our commitment, I therefore take this opportunity to recognize the leadership of the Government of Barbados in this endeavor.

Let me close by borrowing the words of Minister Humphrey – we need to preserve and produce for our people.

**H. E. Michael Gaffey, Ambassador, Ireland Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva**

UNCTAD 15 provides a vital opportunity for transformative policy making and action for the sustainable development of our planet. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the tension between the need for global action to address global problems, and the almost instinctive

initial impulse of many states and systems to focus on the national and the domestic in the heat of perceived existential crisis.

As the pandemic continues, revealing and accentuating inequalities at every level, but with the prospect that vaccines can lift us all out of the crisis, we would do well to review how the world responded, and the implications for progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The themes of the goals remain valid, but the nature of our response to the pandemic crisis will hold lessons for us all on the prospects for their achievement.

This panel discussion comes therefore at a pivotal moment. It is no coincidence that UNCTAD XV will be hosted by Barbados, a Small Island Developing State. The SIDS face the most obvious, although not always sufficiently recognised, existential threat as a result of climate change and rising sea levels. But it is important that we recognise that SIDS interests are not merely sectoral interests. Climate Change and ocean issues are of global impact, not least in terms of international trading patterns and transport links. The development of the ocean economy is central to sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.

Our oceans hold 97% of all our water and 80% of all life forms. They provide enough oxygen for every second breath we take and absorb 50 times more carbon dioxide than our atmosphere. Without healthy oceans, life itself on this planet is at risk. The oceans' vast resources are critical to the health and existence of sustainable human societies.

We know the statistics: \$2.5 trillion in tradable oceans-based goods and services annually, 3 billion coastal residents dependent on the ocean and over 80% of global merchandise carried by sea. If it were a national economy, the global blue economy would be the seventh largest in the world, and the ocean as an economic entity would be large enough to take part in the G7 meetings last week.

In my country's own neighbourhood, Europe's blue economy alone provides 4.5 million direct jobs (and the potential is undoubtedly greater), many in regions where there are few alternatives. It encompasses all industries and sectors related to oceans, seas and coasts, whether they are based in the marine environment like shipping, fisheries, and energy generation or on land like ports, shipyards, aquaculture or coastal tourism.

### **Challenges to our ocean environment and potential responses**

The effects of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions on our oceans are already dramatic. There is already an agenda for action. In terms of mitigation, there is huge ocean-related renewable energy potential through offshore wind. There are opportunities to reduce emissions from ocean-based transport by implementing available technologies to increase energy efficiency (e.g., improved hull design). We can also support the development of low-carbon fuels as part of a broader decarbonisation of ocean industries and energy supply chains, including in port facilities.

There are further opportunities to integrate nature-based solutions into our mitigation and adaptation responses. Sea grasses, mangroves, and salt marshes along our coasts capture and store carbon and act as carbon sinks.

On the adaptation side, a number of actions have been identified to protect vulnerable coastal populations from sea level rise and extreme weather events while supporting livelihoods. For the fisheries sector there is the need to reduce overexploitation. Tourism

must be made more sustainable and benefit local communities. The threats posed by marine pollution, including litter and plastic and other types of waste must also be addressed. In all of these responses, we need international agreement and commitment to responses, but we also need to recognise the central importance of the interests and views of communities directly affected and threatened.

### **Irish efforts to support its marine area**

Ireland is a small island nation, with an economy dependent on external trade and trading links. Our seas play a vital role in terms of our health and well-being, climate, economy and society. And it took us many years of development to recognise this. We were taught in school that Ireland was a country without natural resources. Our population was decimated by famine in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – because of the failure of the potato crop, the main source of food for a poor, rural population.

Yet, if you were to take our seabed area into account, Ireland is one of the largest EU states; with sovereign or exclusive rights over one of the largest sea to land ratios (over 10:1) of any EU State. This is a vast natural resource.

Our ocean economy makes a significant contribution to the Irish economy with an annual turnover of approximately €5.8 billion - providing full-time employment to about 31,000 people. Established marine industries such as shipping, maritime transport, seafood, tourism and leisure in coastal areas account for the majority of total marine turnover.

The Irish public is very clear in its belief that more action is needed to improve the health of our oceans. In 2020, Ireland's first Ocean Citizen Survey was carried out. 92% of respondents strongly agreed that more action is needed to improve the health of the ocean. 85% strongly agreed that human actions are damaging the ocean and that the health of the ocean and their own health is connected. 67% strongly agreed that economic growth and job generation can be supported by the ocean, seas and inland waters.

The 2020 Programme for the current Irish Government contains strong commitments on our oceans and climate change – including support for innovative research on wave technology and floating offshore wind turbines on our Atlantic coastline, and achieving our target of 10% Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with the aim of having 30% MPA coverage by 2030.

Ireland has set out its ambition to achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade. This will require a huge effort. We have set a domestic goal of 70% renewable electricity by 2030 that will require development of significant offshore renewable energy generation capacity.

### **How Ireland supports international ocean action**

This success of this national action, however, is dependent on a more effective international approach. Rising sea levels, ever more severe storm surges, saltwater intrusion and the coastal destruction of recent decades have already taken a massive toll, especially on small islands.

Whether it is the impact on water supplies, agriculture or fisheries, already these nations have very specific needs, and there is an obligation on the international community to engage actively in the work of building resilience for a challenging future.

Ireland is now implementing our first SIDS strategy, recognising our solidarity and commonality of interests with other small island states. We are providing support, for instance within the Asia Development Bank to the Ireland Trust Fund for Building Climate Change and Disaster Resilience in Small Island Developing States, the first single donor trust fund of its kind that Ireland has ever established. Together with the national governments, we are supporting the preparation of community-centric and community-led village level coastal protection plans, and the pilot construction of nature-based coastal protection infrastructure mixing grey and green solutions, planting mangroves or vetiver grass in combination with seawalls to enhance the protection of the coastline.

The ADB Trust Fund is also supporting regional initiatives. So far, allocations have been made to support the Pacific Disaster Resilience Programme, which will benefit all Pacific Islands, and to build the capacity of the Coalition of Atol Nations on Climate Change.

Ireland has also used the Trust Fund to help SIDS respond to the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 and to help bolster social protection supports, assist the most vulnerable in the worst affected states and toward building regional capacity to respond to future shocks. By 2030, Ireland will at least double the percentage of our Official Development Assistance spending on climate finance. Through this funding, we contribute to efforts to support ocean management and sustainability in SIDS.

### **The role of the UN and IGOs in supporting ocean action**

It should be stating the obvious, but the transboundary nature of the marine environment demands multilateral cooperation beyond national and regional boundaries. We are contributing to international efforts as members of the UN, of the EU and of the OSPAR Commission for the North East Atlantic, including the Arctic. The strategy for a sustainable blue economy is a vital element in EU-post pandemic recovery and the Green Deal. Ireland is chairing the EU Atlantic Strategy Committee to promote entrepreneurship, protect and enhance the marine and coastal environment, improve connectivity and support socially inclusive regional development.

These are regional approaches. In looking to the potential for multilateral action, there are multiple roles UNCTAD can play as we seek to build a future of sustainable prosperity for all. Since 2007, through our development programme, Ireland has supported the TrainForTrade Port Management Programme which is a concrete example of how UNCTAD can bring port communities together to address the challenges and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Programme creates port networks bringing together public, private and international entities.

Ireland has supported the English-speaking network of the Programme since its establishment in 2007 and we have seen first-hand the valuable sharing of knowledge between ports in Africa, Asia and the island of Ireland. Our President, Michael D. Higgins, has described the Ports programme as “vitally important in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Accords”. This sharing of experience and knowledge is not one-way. We need to learn from each other in the building of climate resilient seaports. And there have been unforeseen benefits. In linking, through the programme, the ports of Dublin, Belfast and Cork, we have established networks which are assisting in meeting another challenge, that of Brexit and the connectivity challenge of changing trade patterns for reasons other than climate change.

I look forward to participating in the official launch of the TrainForTrade Special Course on Building Port Resilience Against Pandemics – another UNCTAD 15 preparatory online event – on 22nd June next. So far, 349 participants from 74 countries have registered for the course, highlighting the scope of UNCTAD’s links with the port sector and the potential for UNCTAD to play an important role in helping recognise and deliver on the potential of the Ocean Economy worldwide.

Yesterday was UN Oceans Day. The UN Oceans Conference will provide a forum to report on progress towards SDG14 while the UN Decade of the Ocean provides a common framework to ensure that ocean science can fully support countries’ actions to sustainably manage the Oceans and more particularly to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The COVID pandemic has been a wake-up call for our governments and societies. Governments have mobilised financial resources to address the immediate social and economic impact on a scale which had proved politically impossible in response to the science of climate change or the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. As we chart a way towards recovery, it is clear that societies, economies, public and private sector need to adapt to more effective economic models for inclusive and sustainable development and the protection of our planet. Protecting and harnessing the potential of the ocean economy will be an essential element in that recovery from vulnerability and inequality to a globally shared prosperity.

H.E. U. Dwarka-Canabady, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations in Geneva.

## **Where UNCTAD can assist**

### **A. Blue COVID-19 recovery strategies**

1. Thank the organisers - UNCTAD, the panellists and participants convened on such an important High Level Panel discussion on the Oceans and the economy in the perspectives of the UNCTAD 15 and the World Oceans Day celebrated yesterday which had as theme “The **Ocean**: Life and Livelihoods”.

### **The Mauritius Story**

2. UNCTAD pointed out that Mauritius was one of the first countries in the world to define and implemented its ocean strategy and it could not have been otherwise as Mauritius is an Ocean State and the Ocean is our everyday living and is in our collective or individual psyche.

3. The Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius is around 2.3 million km<sup>2</sup>.

- We have some 396,000 km<sup>2</sup> of seabed and subsoil area under Joint Management with the Seychelles.
- Indeed, Mauritius was amongst the first to chart out a road map for the development of the Ocean Economy.

- Ocean Economy contributes some 10.3% of the GDP of Mauritius from principally 3 sectors – Coastal Tourism and marine Leisure, seaport related activities and seafood related activities.
- Objective – To double the contribute of the Ocean Economy from 10.3% to 20% in the medium term with emphasis on emerging sectors such as Maritime Services, Agriculture, Marine Renewable Energy and Biotechnology.

#### **4. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected us?**

- Freight – Maritime activity did not stop during the pandemic contrary to air activity with the exception of cruise tourism.
- Freight rate has doubled in some major routes from 2019-2020 with the Shanghai to South America route reading USD 9000 in August 2020.
- Inflation of the price of containers as empty unused containers were stacked out of the logistics circuit due to lockdowns and limited economic activities.

**Would be interesting to see UNCTAD come up with proposals on how to adjust to such disruptions and keep freight at reasonable prices in times of pandemic?**

- Secondly it would be good to see UNCTAD focus on smaller posts like Port-Louis to see how they can provide mid-way bulk-breaking and distribution so that they become effective distribution centres and have increased maritime presence.

#### **5. Ports and Shipping**

- The second issue I wish to address, and which is core to Ocean strategy is investment in infrastructure.
- Let me recall have that shipping is the backbone of international trade for Mauritius accounts for 99% of trade.
- Mauritius has heavily invested in infrastructure to increase its transshipment volume but has limited financial capacities to do more specially post COVID.
- Need to think of ways to foster the development of SIDS in the international logistics chain the more so as islands are often remote and suffer from the tyranny of distance.

**Can we think of an international financing instrument – can UNCTAD chart out the contours of such a financing instrument? As an example, Mauritius requires \$300 million for a breakwater to secure port infrastructure.**

**Due to Climate Change, Mauritius has had a downtime of some 10 days per year due to adverse weather conditions becoming more frequent. In 2018 this aggregated 41 days. To limit the negative impact of same on competitiveness, Government has had to invest in new infrastructure. This financing should have come from Green funds and other Climate Change**

**Funds, but such funds remain insufficiently responsive to the economic imperatives. Can UNCTAD suggest how Climate Change funds can be adapted so that they may be used for real projects such as post development and building resilience.**

## **6. Marine Renewable Energies**

In the same vein, can UNCTAD examine the use of green funds to see how they may be availed of to develop marine renewable energies, one of the key elements of the Mauritius Ocean Roadmap 2030. Currently, the cost of generation from marine renewable energies is prohibitive.

## **7. Technology Access**

**What will be the accompanying measures that green funds can provide to assist SIDS access technology and initiative marine renewable energy?**

## **8. Coherence**

I turn to the issue of institutional coherence which is essential for well thought out Ocean strategies.

Can UNCTAD chart out an integrated approach that will leverage the other linkages between the Paris Agreement the SAMOA Pathway, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

## **9. The Multilateral Trade System**

We have been asked what are the key outcomes that could improve the Sustainable use of Marine Resources in the MTS? What should be UNCTAD's role?

- In its Concept Paper, UNCTAD pointed out "We have reached the limit of what can be harvested from the ocean".
- Could not agree more that we are alive to the need to balance commercial interests with sustainability. The balance that needs to be achieved there is surely lacking when countries still fighting for flexibility to provide subsidies in areas already overfished. The role of WTO is hard core analysis – is the agreement really in keeping with SD 16.4. Do we need to put a time frame to this agreement so that in 10 years we have a review clause on effect of sustainability?

Ms. Aimee Gonzales, Executive Director, Partnerships in Environmental Management of the Seas (PEMSEA)

No speaker notes. Please refer to her PowerPoint presentation, entitled '[Pursuit of Sustainable Blue Economy During and Beyond the COVID-19 Crisis in the EAS Region](#)'.

Mr. Awni Behnam, Honorary President of the International Oceans Institute

### **1-Role of UNCTAD In Capacity Development For sustainable Ocean Economy.**

The over-arching objective of capacity building is to develop and impart a holistic approach to the challenges and opportunities in the good governance and management of oceans and coasts by *living with the ocean and from the ocean in a sustainable relationship.* \*\*

Thus, ocean related practitioners, mid-high-level government officials, private sector, state entities, NGOs, scientist, etc, as stakeholders in the evolution of the health of ocean and coasts, and sustainable use of ocean resources and services, must adapt to and function in the wider perspective than their own individual place in a sustainable ocean economy governance paradigm.

Relative to the extent of their exposure to the total sum of ocean literacy stakeholders will have to come to terms with the bigger picture of which they may not be aware in managing sustainably their relationship in any ocean related activity or sector.

### **2-The Evolution from Technical Assistance to Capacity Development**

The policies that underpinned “technical assistance” of the 60 and 80s were replaced some ten years later by the notion of “capacity building” as the ultimate objective of any development assistance. Today, as changes take place in mindsets that guide development policies, international development agencies, have come to accept the prerogative of “capacity development” rather than “capacity building”. This concept has a different starting point as compared with capacity building since it begins with a focus on an endogenous local capacity needs community or traditionally driven.

Thus, capacity development is an endogenous course of action that builds on existing capacities and assets, and the ability of individuals, institutions, and societies to perform functions to solve problems and set and achieve objectives sustainably.

It is a process entailing human resource development combined with stronger institutions, in interrelated layers of capacity: individual, institutional, and societal. These three layers are pertinent to an integrated yet sustainable ocean economy governance no matter where the focus lies.

To super impose interdependent ocean policy implies; collaboration in formulating and implementing ocean development strategy that is embedded in a broader national or regional imperative is the role of international institutions, for their knowledge-based mandates that shape and influence ocean policies, rules, and practices in Ocean economy Governance.)

### **3-The Goals of Sustainable Ocean Economy Governance in Capacity Development.**

The interface between ocean economy polices and sustainable development strategies should be seen in relation to empowering current and future policy

makers and stakeholders particularly of developing countries and countries in transition with instrument to be rooted in their national policies. Consequently, there are several capacity developments needs in terms of education, training, research, formulation and implementation of international and national legislation, regulatory frameworks, institutional framework, enterprise development, transfer of technology, participation of civil society, consensus-building, etc.

Normally bilateral and multilateral development agencies aid in either one of the components of an integrated ocean economy policy or on some specific topics within them – the productive sector (fisheries, maritime trade, bio trade, shipping, ports and harbours, energy, recreation) or in the design and implementation and negotiating strategies (links to regional and global programmes) and support services (communication, IT, technology, monitoring, and surveillance.)

An integrated approach, i.e., the linkage between the three areas (individual, societal and institutional) are complex and have direct implication on the way in which capacity development is designed and implemented. By linkages it is referred to a diversity of connections, feedback and causalities that appear in the policy making and law-making process and or in the ocean/coastal Capacity development in an endogenous course of action that builds on existing capacities and assets, and the ability of people, institutions, and societies to perform functions to solve problems and set and achieve objectives.

It is a process entailing human resource development combined with stronger institutions, in three cross linked layers of capacity: individual, institutional, and societal. These three layers are pertinent to integrated Ocean Governance no matter where the focus lies.

To super impose ocean economy policy implies; collaborating in formulating and implementing ocean development strategy that is embedded in a broader national development strategy, strengthening ocean policy and institutions as a basis for generating economic and social benefits, and participating in and benefiting from the institutions, multilateral cooperation and processes that shape national ocean policies, and the rules and practices in Ocean Governance.

This conceptual framework should be seen within the context of the post 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and not only in terms of the stand-alone SDG14 because of the interdependent nature of ocean goals with all other goals.

#### **4-Role for UNCTAD**

Today UNCTAD has an opportunity to initiate a human centered capacity development process that would make a difference in achieving sustainable ocean economy imperatives through establishing and strengthening national and regional centers for training of trainers and by replicating a great success of UNCTAD in the past.

First, we have to be aware of UNCTADs major contribution in the area of maritime trade transport and logistics through knowledge-based capacity building when developing countries faced an enormous challenge in the early 70s of containerization and an evolving technology. UNCTAD instituted an ambitious project training co financed by *SIDA* and UNDP to establish and strengthen local training centres both national regional to meet the challenge of containerisation with the aim to train 100 managers a year in the 70s. The project was training of trainers by creating national centres to train ports and shipping managers at all

different levels. That programme for some three decades (TRAINMAR) became one of the most successful programmes of UNCTAD in the process of which 50,000 managers were trained and developing countries met and overcame the challenge of fast evolving technology in shipping and port development and containerisation at large.

UNCTAD in meeting the challenge of preparing human resources for a sustainable ocean economy would need a kaleidoscope of expertise managers operators and policy makers at all levels. That invaluable experience of TRAINMAR to empower versatile multitasking managers would be most appropriate to replicate to provide the human resources necessary for sustainable ocean economy. Both the experience and the model which can be emulated and restructured to provide the necessary human resources for the critical immediate needs of sustainable ocean economy and blue growth -The opportunity will be available in Barbados to make a difference.

**Second,** I wish to refer to the fact that UNCTAD as a knowledge-based institution has demonstrated over the years the importance of flagship publications that are used consistently as a primary source of information, analysis and basis for policy formulation to all stake holders including the academia and literacy in the broader sense.

An enduring example is the Review of Maritime Transport, a document that has become a principal tool in the expansion of operational knowledge based scientific analysis, providing analytical statistics and exposure to latest

developments in maritime trade whether operational, environmental, economic social and logistics by addressing value chain connectivity. For developing countries, it is considered as a principal tool for capacity building and literacy.

There is no similar compendium for the ocean economy in all its sectorial but interdependent imperatives. It is therefore opportune to build on that experience for UNCTAD to produce a biannual Ocean Economy Review for Sustainable Development that would cover the economic, social, and environmental development dimensions to bridge the gap between myopic institutional silos with narrow sectorial narratives.

The proposed knowledge-based Ocean Economy Review with its statistical analysis and strategic information of the bigger and inclusive narrative for the oceans living and non-living resources and services, will provide a wealth of one stop information and technology for, policymakers, civil societies and communities to manage human interaction with global ocean economy driven by the imperatives of sustainability.

It is perhaps opportune at UNCTAD 15 in Barbados to mandate such a project based on multi-institutional cooperation for capacity development objective to ensure that an individual or community, no matter in which working dimension, can have access to analytical statistics, knowledge-based practices, latest innovations and technology in the various interrelated sectors of the Ocean

Economy and specially to equip practitioners with multi-tasking capacity and multi organisational cooperation in the development of a sustainable ocean economy.