

Annex

Terms of reference for UN-Oceans

A. Scope and objectives

1. UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority, within existing resources, in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the respective competences of each of its participating organizations and the mandates and priorities approved by their respective governing bodies.

B. Mandate

2. UN-Oceans will:

(a) Strengthen and promote coordination and coherence of United Nations system activities related to ocean and coastal areas;

(b) Regularly share ongoing and planned activities of participating organizations within the framework of relevant United Nations and other mandates with a view to identifying possible areas for collaboration and synergy;

(c) Facilitate, as appropriate, inputs by its participating organizations to the annual reports of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea and on sustainable fisheries to be submitted to the Secretariat;

(d) Facilitate inter-agency information exchange, including sharing of experiences, best practices, tools and methodologies and lessons learned in ocean-related matters.

C. Modalities of work

Participation

3. In order to fulfil its mandate on ensuring United Nations system coherence on issues related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, participation in UN-Oceans is open to United Nations system organizations with competence in activities related to ocean and coastal areas and the International Seabed Authority.

Focal point

4. The Legal Counsel/Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea will be the focal point of UN-Oceans. In that capacity, it will:

(a) Convene the meetings of UN-Oceans and organize those meetings, including by preparing and disseminating meeting minutes, reports and background documents;

(b) Facilitate communication among UN-Oceans participants;

(c) Maintain and update information about UN-Oceans activities, make this information available to UN-Oceans participants and United Nations Member States and make it publicly available through the UN-Oceans website (www.unoceans.org);

(d) Represent UN-Oceans at relevant meetings, including those under the General Assembly and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its High-level Committee on Programmes.

Meetings

5. UN-Oceans will hold at least one face-to-face meeting per year, supplemented as needed by virtual (teleconference, videoconference) meetings.
6. As far as practicable, UN-Oceans will hold its face-to-face meetings at United Nations Headquarters, preferably in conjunction with the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.
7. Each meeting will be conducted by a Chair, elected for that meeting among UN-Oceans participants present at the meeting. The Chair of a given UN-Oceans meeting cannot be elected to chair the immediately subsequent meeting.
8. UN-Oceans will endeavour to make maximum use of electronic communication and information management and will conduct intersessional work by electronic means such as teleconferences and videoconferences.
9. UN-Oceans will work on the basis of consensus.
10. UN-Water and UN-Energy may participate in UN-Oceans meetings as invited observers, as appropriate and necessary.

Work programme

11. UN-Oceans will regularly prepare a work programme allowing it to effectively coordinate the response of its participating organizations to the mandates approved by their governing bodies.
12. In support of its mandate and work, UN-Oceans may set up time-bound ad hoc assignments to facilitate coordination on specific issues, open to all participating organizations of UN-Oceans.

Reporting

13. To ensure transparency and accountability:
 - (a) The Secretary-General will report annually on the activities and work programmes of UN-Oceans through his report to the General Assembly on developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea;
 - (b) UN-Oceans, upon request from the General Assembly, will also report to Member States in the context of the meetings of the Informal Consultative Process;
 - (c) Upon request from the General Assembly, feedback and consultation sessions with UN-Oceans may be held in the context of the meetings of the Informal Consultative Process or at any other time deemed necessary by Member States;
 - (d) UN-Oceans will also annually brief the High-Level Committee on Programmes on its activities and work programmes;
 - (e) UN-Oceans will systematically post all of its meeting reports, assignment reports, annual reports to the Informal Consultative Process, and other relevant documents on the UN-Oceans website (www.unoceans.org).
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