



5 JUNE 2015

MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE BLUE WEEK 2015

We, Ministers responsible for Ocean/ Fisheries/ Maritime Affairs, having met in Lisbon on June the 5th, 2015, at the invitation of the Minister of Agriculture and Sea of Portugal, Mrs. Assunção Cristas, in the framework of BLUE WEEK;

Reaffirming that we continue to be guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and recognizing the contribution to the maintenance of peace, justice and progress for all peoples of the world, by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and is of strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector, and that its integrity needs to be maintained;

Reiterating the commitments we have made at the United Nations conferences and summits on sustainable development, including on economic, social and environmental issues, namely Rio + 20 “The Future We Want”, in which States stressed, among other things the crucial role of healthy marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and sustainable aquaculture for food security and nutrition and in providing for the livelihoods of millions of people and emphasized the responsibilities of all States to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all;

Considering that a significant part of life on our planet is found in the ocean, that the world faces the challenge of feeding more than 9 billion people by 2050, that world leaders are committed to eradicating hunger and preventing all forms of malnutrition while maintaining sustainable resources, for which fish and marine resources play a significant role;

Acknowledging that over 90% of the world’s trade is carried by sea;

Noting also that today is World Environment Day and that it is crucial to have a sustainable vision and approach in all policies related to the ocean;

Emphasizing that we share the political responsibility for the promotion of the blue economy in its multiple dimensions – including science based conservation of marine resources and ecosystems -, as one tool for attaining the sustainable development of oceans;

Aware of the role and relevance of Governments, civil society, industry, universities, research centers and NGO’s, among others;



Acknowledging the particular role of the private sector as shown in the Blue Business Forum that is taking place in Lisbon, as well as the global discussion undertaken within the 3rd World Ocean Summit that is being held in Cascais (Portugal);

Blue Economy

1. Recognize that the blue economy is a priority for our societies and populations for the promotion of sustainable development and stress the importance of conservation, pollution reduction and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources for sustainable development, including through contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security, creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time, inter alia, protecting the marine and coastal biodiversity and environment and addressing the impacts of climate change, and providing social protection to all members of society;
2. Affirm that the blue economy needs an innovative, integrated, ecosystem-based and multidimensional approach, that takes into account not only the conventional uses of the oceans but also emerging technologies and uses, in accordance with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS and other relevant international agreements. We, therefore, encourage, Governments and relevant international and regional organizations to enhance policy, legal and institutional tools, highlight the need for increased data and information and recognize the importance of international, regional and cross sectoral cooperation, for the promotion of the blue economy as an effective way to drive environment protection, sustainable development and inclusive economic growth, and job creation;
3. Acknowledge that at the core of the concept of sustainable development is the decoupling of socio-economic development from environmental degradation, following an approach founded upon the assessment and incorporation of the true value of natural capital into all aspects of economic activity. Inherent to this approach is promoting of nature based ecosystem related solutions taking into account ecosystem services and recognizing and placing renewed emphasis on the critical need to effectively address the sound and sustainable use and management of marine resources. The blue economy, in the context of promotion of sustainable development, requires enhanced understanding of the multiple benefits of ecosystem functions, through for example mapping and assessment of ecosystem services. It also requires policies, legislation, infrastructure and incentives to facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy utilizing all available tools, including the ocean's enormous potential for renewable energy. Also note that consistent long-term policies and targeted financial support are relevant to underpin technical advances. Similarly the possibility to systematically reduce land-based and sea based pollution should be addressed;



4. Believe that the blue economy, in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, would benefit from an enhanced scientific knowledge of the ocean and increased technological capability and marine literacy, to provide the basis for informed decision-making and adaptive management, to help to conserve and sustainably develop marine resources, as well as to bridge the gap between research and industry, and in this regard we underline the importance of technical assistance, technology transfer as mutually agreed and capacity building, taking into account the special needs of developing countries;
5. Recall, in that sense, the importance of promoting the development of the marine scientific and technological capacity of States which may need and request technical assistance in this field, particularly developing States, including Small Island Developing States, landlocked and geographically disadvantaged States. Also note the need for cooperation to address the development needs and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries associated with, *inter alia*, their lack of direct territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, in line with the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action.
6. Underline the crucial role of the private sector, including small and medium enterprises, in the promotion, of the blue economy, as crucial actors in policy dialogue, science, technology, innovation, jobs and wealth creation as well as in the promotion of international trade and investment within a sustainable approach, including identification and strategies to address barriers to environmentally sustainable blue products and services;
7. Affirm that sustainably managed fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, ports' development, possible exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil, potential sources of ocean renewable energy, blue technology, observing systems, marine and coastal tourism, maritime sports as well as environmental protection activities are among the main building blocks of a sustainable ocean-based economy;
8. Acknowledge that healthy, productive and resilient ocean and coastal ecosystems and areas are critical for, *inter alia*, poverty eradication, access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, livelihoods, economic development and ecosystem services. We recognize the role of local communities on that regard. Food security is closely related to the sustainable use of the seas and coastal areas. We believe that sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, managed using an ecosystem approach, are vital in combating hunger and securing nutritious food, by offering a huge potential for the provision of food and livelihoods. Their development should maintain and enhance the protection and value of the natural capital, to secure multiple benefits including creating sustainable and decent



employment and offering sustainable high value commodities for export. We also acknowledge the critical nature of combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in achieving sustainable fisheries that provide food and livelihoods;

9. Reaffirm the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and in particular targets 6, 10 and 11.
10. Affirm that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and express our deep concern that all countries, particularly developing countries, are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, all of which threaten food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.. In this regard, we emphasize that adaptation to climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority. We also recognize adverse impacts of climate change pose a risk to all countries and societies, in particular to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities, representing in some cases a significant threat to their survival and viability, and call on the international community to enhance its efforts to address these challenges.
11. Emphasize that adaptation to climate change represents an immediate and urgent global priority and recall that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is the primary international forum for negotiating the global response to climate change, is working towards a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties, to be adopted in Paris in 2015, and express our willingness to cooperate towards that end. Acknowledge the progress made so far within the context of International Maritime Organization (IMO) in response to the air emissions by international shipping.
12. Welcome efforts to increase international cooperation, including the FAO Blue Growth Initiative (BGI) presented during the thirty-first session of the FAO Committee of Fisheries and the call for championing new, concrete and innovative actions and partnerships, specifically in the field of blue Growth and food security.

Maritime Spatial Planning and Management

13. Note that the growth of blue economy and its different activities, in the context of sustainable development, will likely lead to increased competing demands and pressure on marine and coastal ecosystems and resources and recognize, therefore, that ecosystem based maritime spatial planning and management may be helpful, as appropriate, as an effective framework for examining compatibility among competing uses on the basis of the ecosystem-based approach, contributing to better and more sustainable



protection and use of the marine environment, fostering coordination of the actions of public authorities and private initiatives and helping to minimize the possible negative impacts of human activities;

14. Consider that maritime spatial planning and management is a relevant tool to foster sustainable development of the ocean by promoting synergies and sound coordination within marine coastal areas and taking into consideration mitigation and adaptation of climate change;
15. Acknowledge that legal predictability is essential for economic activities and growth, while also contributing to sustainable development, food security, the safeguarding of investments and reduction of costs borne by operators and investors in maritime industries;
16. Invite all relevant players, as appropriate, to consider efficient cross-sectoral and cross-border planning of marine activities and integrated management of coastal zones, including harmonization and sharing of data and information, where appropriate, in order to support decision making, sustainability, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and legal predictability;

Financing Blue Economy

17. Emphasize that mobilizing financing and reducing risk are key to catalyzing action for new investments and that scaling up projects may be important to ensure financeable, transparent, accountable and environmentally sustainable investments, namely taking into account respective national and regional circumstances and capabilities, as well as the need to ensure the protection and sustainable management of the ocean and its biodiversity;
18. Acknowledge that empowering relevant stakeholders with the tools, data and information needed to sustainably manage marine resources and to accurately assess risk and opportunities in the ocean economy is key during its early development stage, in accordance with sustainable development;
19. Acknowledge that financing institutions, namely multilateral, and innovative financial approaches are needed to pool and diversify financing for the ocean economy, diversify its finance and reduce the risk and the cost of capital, as well as maintain ecosystem goods and services ;



20. Reaffirm the importance of making medium and small scale organizations economically viable and financeable, for example, through partnerships and co-operatives;

Ocean Governance

21. Recognize that issues related to the ocean are closely interrelated and should be considered as a whole, in an integrated, holistic, coherent and coordinated approach;
22. Affirm the need to strengthen our presence at sea, to fight against piracy, trafficking and migrant smuggling and their root causes, and to reinforce regional solidarity and responsibility.
23. Recall paragraph 158 of the Rio+20 “The Future We Want”, in which States stressed “the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, including through their contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security and creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change”.
24. Also recall paragraph 162 of Rio + 20 “The Future We Want” and take note of the recommendations adopted in January 2015 by the United Nations Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, including on the development of an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
25. Recognize that the work that has been done so far within the framework of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea is very relevant for the future of the ocean, as well as the Millennium Assessment Process and the development of the Post 2015 Development Agenda. In particular, we acknowledge the necessity to dedicate a specific goal to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
26. Recognize that ocean governance and maritime policies demands more dialogue, coordination and integration of sectorial policies at all levels through the relevant bodies, so that coherent strategies to enhance the sustainable development of maritime sectors can be successful taking advantage of the synergies.