

## **UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue 2026**

Statement by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea,  
Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, allow me to thank the Co-facilitators for the opportunity to participate in this year's meeting of the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue under the panel on ocean-climate-biodiversity synergies and international cooperation.

This intervention will focus on the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), its relevance in the context of climate change and how enhanced cooperation and coordination is at the core of the Agreement and part of its objective. Since we met last year, the Agreement entered into force on 17 January 2026 and, as of today, it has 145 Signatories and 89 Parties.

As you recall, Parties to the Agreement are to be guided by an approach that builds ecosystem resilience, including to adverse effects of climate change and ocean acidification, and also maintains and restores ecosystem integrity, including the carbon cycling services that underpin the role of the ocean in climate regulation. The Agreement takes into account aspects related to climate change under its various Parts, for example in relation to the establishment of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology. It is important to note that the Agreement applies to areas beyond national jurisdiction, hence issues related to ocean-biodiversity-climate change in areas within national jurisdiction – including the territorial sea and exclusive economic zone - remain outside the scope of application of the Agreement.

The Agreement is a cross-sectoral instrument and its effective implementation will be supported by the involvement of relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional, subregional and sectoral bodies (or IFBs). Indeed, the Agreement was born out of the need to enhance cooperation and coordination, including among IFBs, for the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ.

In its general provisions, the Agreement foresees that it shall be interpreted and applied in a manner that does not undermine relevant IFBs, and that promotes coherence and coordination with those IFBs.

The Agreement also requires Parties to cooperate, including through strengthening and enhancing cooperation with and among relevant IFBs, and to endeavor to promote its objectives in decision-making under relevant IFBs.

Several provisions are included in the Agreement to give effect to these general requirements. For example, the Agreement sets out a process for the establishment, implementation and monitoring of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, including with input from relevant stakeholders. IFBs are specifically mentioned as such stakeholders.

Relevant IFBS are also identified as stakeholders in the consultation processes related to environmental impact assessments.

The Agreement includes provisions aimed at promoting capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology through enhanced cooperation, specific modalities and funding, and institutional support. Parties have the obligation to cooperate in CB&TMT directly or through relevant IFBs; and at all levels and in all forms, including

through strengthening cooperation and coordination between relevant IFBs.

The Agreement provides that CB&TMT must build upon, as appropriate, and not duplicate existing programmes and be guided by lessons learnt, including those from CB&TMT activities under relevant IFBs.

The Agreement establishes a number of bodies to review and assist in its implementation, including a Conference of the Parties and several subsidiary bodies. Of particular relevance to IFBs, representatives of such IFBs may request to participate as observers in the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

The COP is also to promote, including by establishing appropriate procedures, cooperation and coordination with and among relevant IFBs.

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties will be held on 11-22 January 2027. In preparation for the entry into force of the Agreement and the convening of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a Preparatory Commission was established by the UN General Assembly. At its third and final session, the Commission adopted a set of 10 recommendations for consideration by the COP at its first meeting, which are now available in the advance, unedited

version of the report of the Commission on the website of the Agreement. They include a draft COP decision on arrangements to enhance cooperation with relevant IFBs which recognizes the role and contribution of relevant IFBs in the attainment of the objectives of the Agreement, as well as that cooperation with IFBs is crucial in its effective implementation.

As appropriate, the dialogue may provide a mechanism to discuss the above provisions of the BBNJ Agreement and related action on cooperation and coordination with IFBs as they may relate to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement.

Thank you Co-facilitators.