



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

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AT

**THE TWENITETH MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL
CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND LAW OF THE SEA**

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Co-Chairs,

Jamaica is pleased that the 20th meeting of the Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea is being held under the theme, “*Ocean Science and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development*.” Our thanks to the different speakers from the Secretariat from whom we’ve heard this morning and our congratulations to you, Co-Chairs, on your appointment to steer our deliberations.

The Secretary-General’s report, contained in document A/74/70, provides a very comprehensive and useful overview of the many issues that need to be borne in mind in this regard. Against this background, my delegation wishes to use this opportunity to draw attention to a few of them.

First, there is no denying the importance of ocean science given the lack of knowledge about the Ocean and its resources. It is striking, as the Secretary-General’s Report confirms, that only an estimated 18 per cent of information on ocean depths is available and that the level of accuracy is even lower. This is especially the case for areas that are beyond national jurisdiction. Consequently, and despite the studies that have been undertaken, it is increasingly clear that significant gaps in information exist that make scientific knowledge, research and transfer of marine technology even more critical. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development represents an important medium through which these objectives can be advanced.

Second, the significance of the Decade is underscored by the relationship between science and the effective management of human activities that rely on and affect oceans and seas. We must accept and do more to reduce the pressures that we have placed on our natural resources. The Government of Jamaica is committed to playing its part in this regard. Priority attention is being given to addressing the effects of climate change, tackling IUU fishing and reducing land-based sources of pollution. A “*ridge to reef*” approach is being adopted as part of the environmental management regime to reduce the erosion of watersheds and the attendant impact on coastal ecosystems. In addition, since the start of 2019, the Government has imposed a ban on single use plastic, straws and styrofoam in an effort to curb marine and other pollution.

As the Secretary-General correctly concludes, “Ocean science cuts across Goal 14 and its interrelated targets.” As a result, enhanced cooperation at all levels must remain a priority so that cross-sectoral and integrated solutions can be utilized in ensuring that the goal and its targets are met. To this end, a mix of traditional and innovative approaches will still be required as will sustained funding and investment for lasting and meaningful impact. The Decade provides an important fulcrum around which all these different facets can be brought together. To this end, we look forward to the implementation plan as well as the road map that will articulate action to be taken in support of the attainment of the objectives of the Decade.

My fourth point concerns the science-policy interface, which remains a critical component of our ongoing discourse. As made manifest by the Regular Process and the First Global Marine Assessment Report, policy decisions must be underpinned by the best available science. The Government of Jamaica is working to advance this objective through opportunities for stronger engagement with stakeholders, including scientists, through the National Council on

Ocean and Coastal Zone Management. Such an approach is not only merited but demanded given the importance of marine and coastal resources across key industries for Jamaica, such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism.

One of the most visible impacts of ocean science is with respect to better understanding and responding to climate change, especially in small island developing states. My delegation, therefore, looks forward to the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate, that is supposed to be published in September 2019. The publication of this report will appropriately coincide with the Secretary-General's special Climate Action Summit that will also be held in September.

Co-Chairs,

Another important dimension that the Secretary-General has identified in his report, which my delegation strongly supports, relates to gender. This leads me to my sixth point – the empowerment of women and girls so that there can be a very visible increase in the number of female researchers in ocean science. It should be of equal concern to all of us that female participation in ocean science ranges from a minimum low of 4 per cent to a maximum of 62 per cent across all categories of ocean science.

Progress realized through ocean science and advances in technological development is linked to the opportunities that individuals and institutions have to being trained in and exposed to marine sciences. Individual and institutional capacity-building remain crucial. Paragraphs 50 to 56 of A/74/70 clearly articulate this position. We would add that needs assessment be a feature of any deliberation on capacity-building.

My delegation welcomes the focus in the Secretary-General's Report to technology and data infrastructure. We are especially in agreement with his assertion that consideration must be given to ways in which "data that is collected is accessed, collated, shared and transformed into information." We regard this as central to ensuring that developing countries can fully benefit from ocean science technology and data, with greater emphasis on access, interoperability, compatibility and the level of user-friendliness. We, therefore, see merit in the notion of these issues being given further consideration for the "adoption and implementation of internationally accepted standards and best practices for the management and exchange of data." Despite its limited fiscal space, Jamaica is committed to improving supporting data and information to guide decision-making processes. We will, however, require ambitious partnerships and collaborative frameworks for this to take effect.

This leads me to my final point – promoting international cooperation and coordination - which is outlined in paragraphs 68 to 73 of the Secretary-General's Report. We will not be able to make any meaningful inroads without significant cooperation at all levels and amongst all partners. We must commit to doing so and reinforce this obligation through the provision of the requisite resources.

Thank you.