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**International Conference on Sustainable Ocean Economy and Climate Change Adaptation:
Solutions for a Resilient Blue Economy**

**12-13 May 2022 | Ha Noi, Vietnam**

**CO-CHAIR’S STATEMENT, 13 May 2022**

**Towards a Sustainable and Resilient Blue Economy**

1. The International Conference on Sustainable Ocean Economy and Climate Change Adaptation: Solutions for a Resilient Blue Economy took place in a hybrid format on 12-13 May 2022 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. The Conference was organized by the Governments of Viet nam and Norway and the United Nations Development Programme.
2. The Conference was opened by H.E. Le Van Thanh, Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam and H.E. Anniken Huitfeldt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway. The Conference was co-chaired by H.E. Le Minh Ngan, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam and H.E. Bjørg Sandkjær, State Secretary of Norway, and attended by Ministers or their senior representatives from Foreign Affairs, Environment, Natural Resources, Climate Change, Ocean and Marine Resources, Agriculture and Fisheries, Sustainable Development, Planning, Tourism and related sectors from 44 countries, as well as representatives from international organizations and finance institutions, international and national research institutions, thinktanks and global centres of excellence, social and non-governmental organizations, and the media.
3. The Conference focused on five key themes: COVID-19 Blue Recovery and Building Forward Better for a Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Ocean Economy; Marine Spatial Planning and Building Climate-Resilient Coastal Cities and Infrastructure; Combating Marine Pollution and Marine Plastics: a Key Challenge of the 21st Century; Climate Security, Gender, and Resilience of Vulnerable Communities; and Finance for Climate and Oceans. A special plenary session on Climate-Related Security Risks was also organized.
4. Discussions and outputs from the Conference are expected to serve as input to UN and other regional and international dialogues and initiatives including the 2022 UN Ocean Conference.

**Key Themes**

1. The Ministers emphasized the common interest in developing and conserving resources for a sustainable and resilient blue economy, ensuring rules-based ocean governance, and that the health of the world’s oceans is critical to our shared future because oceans drive economic growth, innovation and social prosperity, food security, livelihoods and employment in many countries.
2. The Ministers reaffirmed that international law, as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982) and the Convention on biodiversity (CBD 1992), provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources, while protecting biodiversity and the marine environment.
3. The Ministers noted the wide-ranging, severe and intensifying impacts of climate change on the ocean and the blue economy, and emphasized the need to limit global warming to well below 2, and preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels in line with the Paris Agreement (2015), to increase the ability to adapt to adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in the blue economy, and to ensure finance for climate and oceans. The Ministers recognized the economic advantages of transitioning to a climate resilient future global economy and appreciated net zero or carbon neutrality commitments in this regard.
4. The Ministers noted the significant impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on key sectors of the blue economy, including travel, tourism, maritime transport, fisheries and seafood production, and emphasized the need for a sustainable and inclusive blue recovery including investments in resilient and sustainable costal and marine ecosystems, infrastructure for coastal and marine-dependent cities and communities, aquaculture, fisheries and processing, coastal and marine tourism, and incentivising zero-emission marine transport and ocean-based renewable energy.
5. The Ministers noted that climate-related security risks have emerged as a critical concern, as climate change has multiplied, amplified and created new national, regional and global security risks which can lead to water scarcity, food insecurity, and large-scale displacement.
6. The Ministers acknowledged that climate change and the rapid decline in ocean health are particularly serious challenges for Small Island Developing States, members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), and Least Developed Countries as well as many middle income developing countries, and that many of those countries are strongly dependent on the sustainable use of resources provided by the ocean and coastal areas, for livelihoods, economic development and growth.
7. The Ministers noted the challenge posed by the exponential increase in plastic pollution in recent decades, and the resolution of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on 02 March 2022 entitled *End Plastic Pollution: Towards an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument*, and emphasized the need for rapid progress on next steps set out in this Resolution including the establishment and activities of the intergovernmental negotiating committee as set out in the resolution alongside ongoing practical and concrete efforts at regional, national and local levels aimed at reducing plastic pollution and marine debris.
8. The Ministers noted the opportunities and necessity of taking forward shared and joint efforts through global and regional mechanisms and forums, including the United Naions Environment Assembly (UNEA), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the forthcoming UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, and the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy chaired by Norway and Palau, and supporting ASEAN’s efforts and commitment to take the lead on regional cooperation in relation to the Blue Economy.
9. The Ministers emphasized their resolve to achieving the global and national targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 14 on life below water, , as well as their commitments at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26).

**The Way Forward**

1. The Ministers identified the need for all related parties to address these issues at local, national, regional and global levels, on the basis of the UNCLOS 1982, with the following priority actions.
2. Covid-19 blue recovery and building forward better for a climate-resilient and sustainable ocean economy:
	1. Creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment for a sustainable and climate-resilient blue economy; and making a sustainable ocean economy and climate change adaptation top priorities in national recovery plans;
	2. Building the resilience and adaptive capacity of vulnerable countries, communities and related stakeholders, including smallholder farming and fishing households, to develop and grow key ocean economy sectors;
	3. Promoting investment in research and the application of science and technology in fishing and aquaculture activities;
	4. Strengthening and enforcement of regulations to address overfishing and developing sustainable aquaculture models and practices for improving food security and resilience of vulnerable developing countries and coastal communities;
	5. Maintaining and restoring essential maritime transport value chains during Covid-19 and developing low-carbon and sustainable maritime transportation systems and climate-smart and resilient ports and other sea and coastal infrastructure, urban, industrial, coastal and marine land use plans for sustainale economic development;
	6. Promoting sustainable recovery of tourism from Covid-19 impacts and building forward better to develop resilient marine and coastal tourism; preventing damage caused by uncontrolled mass tourism; developing nature-based tourism and tourism activities based on marine and coastal ecosystem protection and conservation; and setting ecological and infrastructure standards that promote ethical, sustainable and resilient marine and coastal tourism;
	7. Promoting the appropriate development of affordable renewable marine and ocean energy sources;
	8. Stimulating investment in research, technology development, transfer of technology, capacity-building, and pilot projects to access all types of marine renewable energy - including wind, wave, tidal, current, thermal and solar energy, including development of frameworks, in collaboration with industry and other stakeholders, that consider the environmental impacts of marine renewables and allow for capacity, coexistence, and integration with other uses of the ocean;
	9. Strengthening research and monitoring of management of marine resources, to enhance knowledge and best practices on sustainable blue economy, and enable policy and decision-making, including multi-dimensional impacts of sea-level rise.
3. Addressing climate-related security risks
	1. Addressing climate-related security within global and regional security cooperation mechanisms, including climate-related migration and internal displacement, climate-related transboundary water security and food security issues, taking into account economic, social, psychological, and gender aspects;
	2. Strengthening reporting by the United Nations Secretary-General on the security implications of climate change for relevant countries or regions and specific contexts on the agenda of the Security Council;
	3. Integrating climate-related security risks in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian efforts;
	4. Developing a more system-wide coherent response to the adverse impacts of climate change, including security-related aspects, which are crucial to ensuring sustainable peace in situations on the Security Council’s agenda.
	5. Developing climate-related early warning systems and mechanisms for regular and timely coordination and sharing of information to address climate-related security risks, and developing conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding;
	6. Addressing climate risks in mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts. The shared experience of climate change can be an entry point for building trust and dialogue across communities.
4. Marine spatial planning and building climate-resilient coastal cities and infrastructure:
	1. Establishing and strengthening regional and national mechanisms for marine spatial planning to provide a framework for the sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services derived from the sea areas, and at the same time maintaining the structure, functioning, productivity and diversity of the marine ecosystems, ensuring sustainable development, and enhancing the capacity of adaptation to climate change and sea level rise. This entails close, synchronous and effective cooperation and coordination across sectors such as fisheries, tourism, maritime transport and marine power development to accommodate and resolve conflicts between the different interests and priorities;
	2. Welcoming and supporting the main conclusion from the High Level Panel on a Sustainable Ocean Economy on developing sustainable ocean mangement plans within 2030.
	3. Promoting, in the context of Covid-19 recovery and beyond, the development of low-carbon and climate- and disaster-resilient coastal cities, tourism, industry, energy and transport infrastructure, , including nature-based solutions for resilient coastal cities, engaging the private sector and vulnerable communities;
	4. Promoting partnerships and collaboration for synergies between initiatives on climate change adaptation and sustainable growth in the various sectors of the blue economy.
5. Protection of the ocean, combating marine pollution including plastic pollution:
	1. Enhancing global action to address plastic pollution, accelerating progress toward an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution to prevent and reduce the environmental impact of plastic pollution in line with the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution on ending plastic pollution;
	2. Strengthening cooperation on managing, monitoring and resolving environmental pollution in international waters;
	3. Achieving sustainable production and consumption, in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12;
	4. Promoting a circular global economy, in cooperation with the private sector, and addressing the full lifecycle of plastics, encouraging the development, production, and use of feasible and sustainable alternatives to plastics, and
	5. Reducing significantly plastic pollution from land-based activities as well as plastic pollution from ships and discarded fishing gear;
	6. Strengthening core capacities for surveying ocean resources and environment and for protection of biodiversity, ecosystems and marine coral reefs;
	7. Affirming that protection of the ocean and combatting marine pollution should be carried out on the basis of the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;
	8. Welcoming the Bangkok Declaration on Combatting Marine Debris in the ASEAN Region;
	9. Calling on all Members States of the United Nations to support the implementation of the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution on ending plastic pollution.
6. Ensuring gender equity, and enhancing the resilience of vulnerable communities:
	1. Promoting gender equality and strengthening the role of women in the blue economy, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation, including opportunities for women in marine-related activities to realize their economic and social potential and to enable them to protect natural resources while increasing opportunities for quality education and decent work;
	2. Safeguarding the respect and protection of the human rights, gender equality, community and participation of Indigenous People through their free, prior and informed consent;
	3. Strengthening education and awareness raising on ocean economy and climate change adaptation;
	4. Promoting inclusion of sustainable ocean economy and climate changeresilience in global and regional forums, governance and cooperation mechanisms.
7. Access to effective, equitable, adequately finance for climate change mitigation and adaptation in support of a sustainable and resilient blue economy:
	1. Promoting innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms that will provide long-term, reliable and catalytic funding for scaling up financial flows for a low-emission, climate-resilient, and sustainable blue economy;
	2. Incorporating finance for climate change mitigation and adaptation and the ocean economy in Covid-19 economic stimulus and recovery policies and plans;
	3. Strengthening the roles and engagement of the private sector in achieving SDGs 13 & 14.
8. A sustainable blue economy depends on leveraging the full economic potential of our oceans in an integrated manner, while protecting and conserving ocean resources for future generations. Climate change adaptation requires effective leadership and integrated and coordinated efforts at all levels, involving all stakeholders, in particular ensuring the full, meaningful, and equal participation of women, young people, the private sector, social organizations, and the scientific community and academia.

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