

United Nations Nations Unies

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10 December 2015

Dear Madam/Sir,

With the present letter, we seek the contribution of your Organization to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to General Assembly draft resolution A/70/L.22, entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea" (document currently available at undocs.org/A/70/L.22). The General Assembly considered the draft resolution on 8 December 2015. Its adoption, however, is expected to take place later this month in view of its programme budget implications.

In paragraph 324 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report, for its consideration at the seventy-first session, on developments and issues relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, including the implementation of the draft resolution, and to prepare a separate section of the report on the topic of focus of the seventeenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (the "Informal Consultative Process"). Paragraph 316 of the draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to bring the draft resolution to the attention of heads of intergovernmental organizations, and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations engaged in activities relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, as well as funding institutions, and underlines the importance of their constructive and timely input for the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea.

In accordance with past practice, it is anticipated that the report will be issued in two parts. Part I of the report will provide information on the topic of focus of the seventeenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, which pursuant to paragraphs 309 and 312 of the draft resolution, and paragraph 298 of resolution 69/245, will be held in New York from 13 to 17 June 2016 and will focus its deliberations on the topic entitled "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics".

At this stage, I would like to invite your Organization to submit its contribution to Part I of the report, on the above-mentioned topic. It is suggested that the contribution could outline, inter alia: (i) challenges posed by marine debris, plastics and microplastics;

Specialized agencies, funds and
programmes of the United Nations
Intergovernmental Organizations
Funding institutions

(ii) actions and activities that have been undertaken by your Organization with regard to the provisions of General Assembly resolutions on oceans and the law of the sea and resolutions on sustainable fisheries that relate to marine debris, plastics and microplastics (including paras. 163-164 and 181-184 of resolution 69/245, and paras. 170-171, 188-193 and 246 of draft resolution A/70/L.22; and paras. 108, and 168-169 of resolution 69/109 and paras. 113 and 174-175 of resolution 70/75, currently available as A/70/L.19); and (iii) any suggestions for further action to prevent and significantly reduce marine debris, plastics and microplastics. In that regard, the commitment of States in “The Future We Want” and in the Goal 14 of “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is also recalled.

Due to the restrictions on the length of the documents emanating from the Secretariat of the United Nations, this Office may not be in a position to reflect the full contribution of your Organization in the report. Therefore, your Organization is kindly invited to provide, together with its contribution, an executive summary not exceeding 400 words.

As in the past, notwithstanding the limitation on the length of documents, this Office stands ready, with the consent of your Organization, to publish on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the full text of the contribution of your Organization. In this context, I would like to draw your attention to General Assembly resolution 69/324, entitled “Multilingualism”, which emphasizes the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations and reiterates that all content-providing offices in the Secretariat should continue their efforts to translate into all official languages all English-language materials and databases posted on the United Nations website in the most practical, efficient and cost-effective manner. Consequently, this Office would appreciate it if the contribution were transmitted in English by the deadlines indicated, accompanied later by a translation into the official languages of your Organization for posting on the website, as appropriate.

It would also be greatly appreciated if the contribution of your Organization could be transmitted directly to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs (email: doalos@un.org), in electronic format, by 22 January 2016.

An invitation to contribute to Part II of the report regarding all other developments in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea within the scope of the activities of your Organization will be sent in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Miguel de Serpa Soares
Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs
and United Nations Legal Counsel