

Bangladesh Interfaces with the Ocean (SDG 14)

Concept paper for the Ocean Conference, 5-9 June 2017

1. Healthy oceans are critical for sustaining life, eliminating poverty and promoting prosperity. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the country has now settled the maritime boundary issues with two of its neighbours and is now in the early stages of formulating an appropriate strategy to harness the potential of Blue Economy – which some estimates suggest, would not be anything lesser and possibly more than those accorded by the land based economic systems. The national maritime territory of more than 118,813 square km has opened up new opportunities in sectors like marine fisheries, mariculture, renewable energy, off-shore energy and minerals, submarine mining, marine biotechnology, maritime trade, shipping, tourism and various other marine ecosystem-based services. The most important element in this exercise is the possibility of ‘defining’ a new economic doctrine which is independent, balanced and expanding in matters of technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.
2. The time is now to move from words to actions to conserve and sustainably use our oceans, seas and marine resources. It is with this purpose that the Ocean Conference In June 2017 is presenting a unique opportunity for the world to mobilize action and deliver concrete solutions. One of the goals of this event is to gather as many voluntary commitments as possible to help spur action towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, which aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The international community is therefore strongly encouraged to make voluntary pledges via the Conference website ahead of the event.
3. All Conference accredited participants are invited to indicate interest to present their registered voluntary commitments during the seven Partnership Dialogues. The Partnership Dialogues, an official part of the Conference, will be interactive and multi-stakeholder in nature and will focus on recommendations for implementation of Goal 14, as well announcement of concrete solutions to address challenges and gaps in the implementation of Goal 14 targets by presenting voluntary commitments from all stakeholders. The Conference is expected to:
 - a. Identify ways and means to strengthen cooperation for the implementation of SDG 14 and related targets, taking into account their inter-linkages with other goals and targets
 - b. Build on existing successful partnerships, and launching innovative new ones to advance implementation
 - c. Involve all relevant stakeholders to assess progress and identify implementation gaps
 - d. Facilitate the sharing of experiences gained through regional and national strategies/institutions
 - e. Contribute to the follow-up and review process of SDG 14 by reporting its outcomes to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
4. In Bangladesh, a total of 14 sites are identified as Area of Significance (AOS) which again have been summarized mainly in four broad sites and declared as Marine Protected Area (MPA), those are: (i) St Martin’s Island and its adjacent water area (approximately 100 km²), (ii) Nijhum Dwip and its adjacent water area (approximately 300 km²), (iii) marine reserve area declared by the Department of Fisheries (approximately 5000 km², and (iv) Sundarbans and its water territory. As a State Party, Bangladesh is committed to declare 10% of the marine areas as MPA, i.e. a total of approx. 15,000 square kilometers by 2020 to achieve the “Aichi Biodiversity Target” fixed at Nagoya COP of CBD. The mangrove ecosystem adjacent to coastal areas of southwestern Bangladesh is critically important as breeding and nursery

grounds for many marine species. In addition to providing habitats to numerous species, the EEZ of Bangladesh also supports livelihoods for about 11 million people in the coastal zone. One of the main objectives of establishing an MPA is to create fish refuge in the marine environment. On 3 November 2014, the Government of Bangladesh declared the country's first Marine Protected Area, the "Swatch of No Ground", to safeguard whales, dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, and other oceanic species under the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012. Marine fisheries contribute 19.4% of total fish production (2.56 million tons) of Bangladesh. FAO and UNDP supported background study of 7th five-year plan titled "[Opportunities and Strategies for Ocean and River Resources Management.](#)" Bangladesh has also enacted laws against manufacture and use of polythene/plastic bags and for conservation and sustainable fishing practices.

Key Ministries/agencies and other stakeholders

5. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock/ Department of Fisheries/Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute/Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation, the Ministry of Environment and Forests/ Department of Environment/ Department of Forests, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Science and Technology /National Oceanographic Research Institute, Ministry of Shipping/Shipping corporation/Department of Shipping/IWTA/IWTC, Ministry of Home affairs/Bangladesh Coast guard, Ministry of Defence/Meteorological Department/ SPARSSO, Prime minister's office /Armed forces Division/ Bangladesh Navy, Ministry of Energy and Mineral resources/ Blue economy cell/GSB, Institute of Marine and Fisheries Science, Chittagong University, Department of Oceanography, University of Dhaka, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University, Fish and Marine Resources Technology discipline, Khulna University, Fisheries Department, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Marine Academy and Marine Fisheries Academy, Shipping organizations, and Fish exporters association etc and other international organizations like UNDP, FAO and IUCN working in Bangladesh.

Priority in National Development Plan

6. Unlocking the potential of the Blue Economy has been cited as one of the growth drivers in the 7th Five Year Plan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs along with the EU is currently carrying out a study on the state of blue economy in Bangladesh and to identify the areas needing additional attention to reap the benefits in future and to bring about real changes in the sectors covered by the blue economy. There have been several projects regarding management and conservation of marine resources. The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project was implemented to improve regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries. FAO also implemented the Empowerment of Coastal Fishing Communities for Livelihood Security (2000-2005) with a budget of US \$6.2 million. The Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Capacity Building Project was implemented under financial assistance from OIC (US\$ 17.07 million). UNDP is currently implementing a project titled "Expanding the Protected Area System to Incorporate Important Aquatic Ecosystems" with US\$10.6 million and "Integrating community based adaptation into afforestation and reforestation project" with US\$5.6 million funding support from GEF. There are two projects under UNDP's adaptation project in the pipeline-"Initiative for climate vulnerable offshore Small Island and riverine charland in Bangladesh" (US\$ 10 million) and "Ecosystem based management of ecological critical areas" (US\$ 3.7 million). The World Bank is also designing projects title "Bangladesh Sustainable Coastal and Marine Development fisheries project" (first phase US\$ 200 million, 2nd phase US\$ 300 million) and Sustainable Forests & Livelihood (SUFAL) (US\$ 175 million) and Bangladesh Regional Waterways Transport project (US\$ 360 million). The Bangladesh Sustainable Coastal and Marine Fisheries Development Project (\$200 million) would support both domestic and export-oriented economic growth in improving production and trade of fish and fish products, livelihood diversification and food security for the poor.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14

7. According to the report of the UN Secretary General, 2016, Oceans, along with coastal and marine resources, play an essential role in human well-being and social and economic development worldwide. They are particularly crucial for people living in coastal communities, who represented 37 per cent of the global population in 2010. Oceans provide livelihoods and tourism benefits, as well as subsistence and income. They also help regulate the global ecosystem by absorbing heat and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and protecting coastal areas from flooding and erosion. The sustainable use and preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems and their biological diversity is essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda, in particular for Least Developed States. A plenary session is being arranged for the member states from 5 to 9 June 2017 during the Ocean Conference and parallel to the plenary there will also be 7 partnerships dialogues, which are correlated to the SDG 14 targets. In line with the requirements of the Ocean conference and to prepare the position of Bangladesh, a national consultation is planned to be held on 1st June 2017 covering the following areas;

a. **Addressing marine pollution-(Target 14.1)** originates from a number of land-based and marine sources such as: riverine discharges, agricultural and industrial run-off, urban outfalls, municipal or industrial wastewater, atmospheric deposition, illegal or indiscriminate dumping, accidents (e.g. oil spills), fishing operations, fishing activities and aquaculture; maritime transport, Off shore activities (e.g. seabed mining), introduction of invasive species, population density in coastal zones and lack of environmentally sound waste management in coastal cities, coastal infrastructure, intensive coastal land uses, nutrient load pollution and solid waste discharges, including in the form of litter, plastics and sewage/wastewater, physical alterations and destruction of habitats and sediment mobilization, heavy metals, radioactive substances and wildlife entanglement etc.

b. **Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems (Target 14.2) and Marine Protected Areas (Target 14.5):** By 2020, we shall have to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans. Managing ecosystems sustainably involves balancing sustainable use and biodiversity and habitat conservation on the basis of the best available scientific information, data, and knowledge and best practices. By 2020, we shall have to conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information, bringing together governments, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, private sector, philanthropic organizations and other actors. Area-based conservation measures and management tools can be used to help achieve target 14.5, including through the application of an ecosystem approach, marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management and the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

c. **Minimizing and addressing Ocean acidification (blue carbon) (Target 14.3):** Sea level rise is threatening coastal communities through flooding of low lying coastal lands, estuaries and deltas, and affecting fish nesting and fishing grounds, e.g. wetlands, and coral reefs, mangrove forests and marshes. We must identify the local challenges (scientific, communication, policy), starting at level of awareness, clearly there is a need to increase the knowledge about the impacts and consequences of ocean acidification at all levels and the need to observe the effects decreasing ocean acidity to close existing data gaps.

d. **Making fisheries sustainable (Targets 14.4 and 14.6):** By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest

time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics. More than 3 billion people rely on fish for animal protein, and some 300 million people find their livelihoods in marine fisheries. Global average fish consumption is increasing, and fish consumption in SIDS /LDCs is 3 to 4 times the global average. Ensuring access to marine resources, ensuring equitable benefits for communities, participatory decision-making processes and robust implementation of existing negotiated guidance and legal frameworks, are essential to achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda, including Target 14.6 i.e. By 2020, countries shall have to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation. But with the SDG target 14.6's deadline to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies by 2020 looming, this issue is finally gaining momentum.

e. **Increasing economic benefits to SIDS & LDCs (Target 14.7) and providing access to small scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets (Target 14.b)** - By 2030, there is a need to increase the economic benefits to LDCs from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of tourism and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets. Economic benefits from the oceans for many of the LDCs can be derived from sustainable "blue economy". The blue economy concept moves beyond business as usual to consider economic development and ocean health as compatible propositions and the blue economy is generally understood to be a long term strategy aimed at supporting sustainable economic growth through oceans-related sectors and economic activities, while at the same time improving human well-being and social equity and preserving the environment. According to estimates, artisanal small-scale fishers and related workers comprise over 90 percent of people employed globally in capture fisheries and related activities, although they only capture less than 35 per cent of the global catch. Small scale fisheries provide more than 60% of protein intake in some developing countries. Almost half of these are women and 90-95% of the catch produced by the small-scale landings is destined for local human consumption many indigenous peoples and their communities also depend on small-scale fisheries. Providing access for small- scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets presents challenges and will require a range of actions such as implementing policies that promote business activity without increasing pressure on fisheries, improving access to education to foster community development and empowerment and undertaking legal changes that can benefit small-scale fisheries.

f. **Increasing scientific knowledge, developing research capacity and transfer of marine technology (Target 14.a)**: Scientific understanding is essential to forecast, mitigate and guide the adaptation of societies to the ways oceans affect human lives and infrastructures at different spatial and temporal scales. Most States and relevant organizations have established institutional infrastructures to carry out specific activities or programmes related to marine science, such as oceanographic institutes and several States have developed marine policies that encompass marine science and technology plans and strategies to build the required human and technical capacity.

g. **Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law (Target 14.c)** -Enhancements sought within target 14.c in implementing international law as reflected within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, particularly in relation to duties of States for the management of marine natural resources, have a direct correlation with the fight against IUU.

8. Call for Action-What are the priority actions which we can all rally around in global 'Calls for Action' to make fisheries/our seas sustainable?

- a. Having more engagements with the local fisher folks to sensitize them about the sustainable fishing practices. Let them understand and appreciate its importance towards fisheries sustainability
- b. Training the fisher folks in better harvesting, handling and preservation methods
- c. Influencing governments to have better legislation on fisheries and enforce these laws
- d. Continuous research within the fisheries sector to understand the problems towards fisheries sustainability. Research should be continuous because of the changing dynamics
- e. Share any innovative partnerships - existing or proposed - aimed at making fisheries sustainable.
- f. Better monitoring, introduction of multi-species ecosystem based management, fleet capacity reduction, elimination of by catch and discard, seafood trade transparency improvement.
- g. Disposal of wastes should be dealt by both public and private sectors (perhaps under govt. license). Support service from the govt. should be provided to tile stakeholders to take responsibility of their wastes and participation in waste minimization
- h. New regulations needs to be made, so that they fit into an existing frame works of law on municipal wastes, chemicals all types of land based and sea based pollution and pesticides
- i. Systematic study on the sources, fate, and extent of current industrial effluents dumping in the water body and assessment of overall impacts on aquatic life as well as human health should be started soon.
- j. Integrated land use planning and land zoning should be made. Research is utmost important on the late and effect of photo-transformation by-products of oils (PAHs) and its impacts on biota.
- k. A gas free certificate must be obtained before any ship was broken. Oil must be removed and the oil tanks must be thoroughly cleaned either chemically or manually and the ship breakers must obtained a tank clearance certificate from the Mercantile Marine Department before the ship is broken and ships carrying noxious and hazardous substances could be considered banning for purchase. Training, educating, awareness program, legal and enforcement mechanisms, financial mechanisms, contingency planning, research and monitoring, and public participation are necessary element to achieve this goal.
- l. No research institution in Bangladesh although 'BORI, is under process for the last 20 years.
- m. Persuading people not to use the oceans as a rubbish receptacle remains a challenge and measures to reduce inputs not been successful
- n. Inadequacy of port reception facilities must be addressed. Port reception facilities and treatment of ballast water and bilge (engine wastes) to be created without any delay
 - o. Regional solutions could assist in less developed geographical areas
- p. Further, enforcement of International regulations relies on political will and capacity of flag States
- q. Involvement of organizations DU, Oceanography, BSMMR University, IMS CU, SPARRSO, EGIS, IMCO, IMO, ICZM, Bangladesh Navy, Port Authority. Coast Guard etc., scientists and marine engineers.
- r. An "Oil Pollution Model" should be built for regional management of oil pollution in the Bay of Bengal.
- s. The other waste streams that are generated that are not as obvious as plastic/polythene litter is just as important and also needs to be highlighted. Bioaccumulation and toxicity in the ecosystem is an area of continued research to better understand not only the risks (human, ecosystem health) but what can be done to influence practice of upstream generators.

- t. Lack of data, sources and hotspots. In most places no waste management in place. No environmental education in the national curriculum / lack of awareness about the impact of waste on the environment, on public health and on the economy taking into account to the above stated pressure, focus could be made on
 - u. Defining national research assessment in order to plan for coastal and marine environment management;
 - v. More effective and targeted dissemination of research findings;
 - w. improving the accessibility of scientific data and information;
 - x. Promoting indigenous knowledge for management in order enhance the involvement of the coastal communities;
 - y. Improving the generation of knowledge through direct research programs and projects;
 - z. Support the development and consistency of periodic reporting of coastal and marine bordering State to the Regional Administrations levels;
 - aa. Promoting the participation of experts, scientists, managers, decision and policy makers from all levels
 - ab. Arranging national environment on Marine and Coastal management symposium or conferences in the local levels with the stakeholders.
9. Decisions on **voluntary contributions** may also be taken by the national ocean consultation planned to be organized in 1 June 2017. A national voluntary commitment will be finalized in the national consultation. Announcing a ban on the use, manufacture and import of polythene/plastic bags, promoting biodegradable jute bags/materials, conservation of fishery in the Bay of Bengal, and ban on destructive fishing, and declaring special measures for the Mangroves afforestation and reforestation – particularly in the coastal areas and the Sundarbans - could be proposed as some of the voluntary contributions from Bangladesh.