

Statement by the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti on World Oceans Day

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Brussels, 8 June 2021/OACPS: On behalf of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, joins the global community of our Blue Planet in marking this year's World Oceans Day. On this Day, we are invited not just to recognise the importance of our oceans but also to raise awareness about the impacts of human actions on the oceans and to generate bold, ambitious action to improve ocean governance. It is also a day to celebrate the Ocean that nurtures, nourishes, and sustains us.

The Ocean is essential for sustaining life on our planet. It provides a large part of the oxygen we breathe. It regulates the climate, and proves livelihoods for millions of peoples the world-over. The Ocean and its resources are the foundation of the economies of many members of the OACPS, and especially for critical sectors such as tourism and fisheries. The 38 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the OACPS have a special relationship with the Ocean for their livelihoods, wellbeing, heritage and food security. The quality of life of OACPS SIDS is inevitably connected to the overall health of the ocean and its resources.

Regrettably, the World's oceans are under severe threat from global warming, ocean acidification, overfishing, and pollution. These perils are impacting biodiversity and its ability to provide the essential benefits and services for our peoples and for overall planetary health.

As we observe this year's World Oceans Day under the theme, "*The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods*," the Secretary-General underlines the urgency of undertaking concrete actions to reverse the cycle of the decline of ocean health and improve its governance. In this context, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) is an important call to action to provide the much-needed science and to bridge the policy gaps necessary for restoring the degraded ocean ecosystems and ensure the sustainable management, use and conservation of the ocean and its resources.

The Secretary-General reiterates OACPS' commitment to forging genuine and durable partnerships, collaboration and cooperation to embrace integrated actions that contribute to solving the problems confronting our oceans. The shared and interconnected nature of the World's oceans requires coordinated efforts across many regions, with the many actors and stakeholders – all to be able to sustainably manage, use and conserve the oceans and its resources for present as well as for future generations.

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