



MEETING BRIEF

Innovation in Partnerships SDG 14: Life below Water

Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources is one of the most ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indeed, of its seven targets, five have due dates before 2030. In order to meet these ambitious deadlines, the United Nations is organizing an Ocean Conference in June 2017. Expected to be a “game-changer,” this conference is the first of its kind, providing a unique forum for member states to adopt a “Call for Action” outlining concrete, action-oriented commitments to support the implementation of SDG 14. In addition to generating concrete voluntary commitments to implement SDG 14, the Ocean Conference will also seek to develop innovative, inclusive, and multilayered partnerships with all relevant stakeholders.

In anticipation of this conference, Secure Fisheries, One Earth Future Foundation, the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, the World Ocean Council, and the International Peace Institute co-organized a workshop on “Life below Water” in New York on February 13, 2017, as part of the **Innovation in Partnerships** series. The following are the key takeaways from this event:

1. To track progress on all partnerships and voluntary commitments, the Ocean Conference should establish multi-stakeholder expert working groups for each target of SDG 14 to work in coordination with the relevant UN agencies. These working groups would prevent the duplication of efforts by centralizing all partnership initiatives. They would also facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement by **matching the specific needs of member states—such as access to technology, capacity building, and funding—with the services of relevant stakeholders**. The working groups would collaborate with follow-up processes already established in the 2030 Agenda and other international conferences.
2. Access to reliable data is essential to track progress on the implementation of SDG 14. The international community should build on and strengthen existing multi-stakeholder data-sharing initiatives. This could include establishing a **data-collection hub** to better identify gaps and avoid overlapping efforts while building trust and creating synergies between the various communities of practice, including governments, scientists, and industry. To ensure the hub is accessible to all countries, sufficient funding for transferring technologies to support computing infrastructure in developing countries will be necessary.
3. An expert working group that focuses on **what could drive incentives** for implementing SDG 14 should be established. It could involve, among other actors, financial experts who can “make the case” for the economic benefits of implementing SDG 14 to finance ministries and industry representatives worldwide. The working group could promote peer-to-peer learning, including from countries and industry leaders that are already “racing to the top.”
4. A **global communication strategy** should be developed to lay out an aspirational vision for the oceans. This strategy should involve “naming and faming,” emphasizing ocean success stories that support SDG 14 at all levels—global, regional, national, and municipal—and targeting civil society, the private sector, academics, practitioners, and ordinary citizens. This strategy would raise awareness, highlight opportunities and best practices, and identify challenges to implementation.