



Promoting sustainable development: A perspective from the modern law of the sea

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STATEMENT

by

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It is my great and sincere pleasure to join this side event sponsored by the Permanent Missions of China and Fiji to the United Nations and to offer a few remarks on the importance of the law of the sea for sustainable development.

In talking about the modern law of the sea it is impossible to underestimate the importance of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its contribution to the rule of law in the ocean.

UNCLOS is a fundamental part of the rules based international order that has ensured peace at sea for 40 years. It stands as a testament to the success of multilateralism as a foundation for the maintenance of peace, justice, economic and social advancement for all peoples of the world.

It not only provides a solid institutional and jurisdictional framework for activities in the ocean but also is one of the most far-reaching environmental treaties ever adopted.

It provides us with the best and indeed only opportunity to achieve the twin, and equally important, objectives of conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources.

Amongst other things UNCLOS creates an unqualified obligation on States to protect and preserve the marine environment. It is worth noting that this obligation is unqualified and holistic, applicable to all zones of maritime jurisdiction and to all elements of the marine environment, including its biodiversity.

At its core, however, is a collective vision of a shared future for humanity based on a comprehensive legal regime to achieve the sustainable use of marine mineral resources.

This vision is realised by the establishment of the International Seabed Authority which has been equipped with a series of unique and complementary responsibilities including to manage activities in the Area beyond national jurisdiction, protect the marine environment, promote, and encourage marine scientific research and share the benefits on the basis of equity.

In reflecting on UNCLOS at 40 years old, I would encourage States parties to remain vigilant to ensure that all provisions of UNCLOS are implemented effectively and that the institutions mandated for this purpose are supported and not undermined. Support for UNCLOS will be critical if we are to achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.
