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ENV 144
CLIMA 48
COMAR 3
CONUN 45
DEVGEN 26
AGRI 68
PECHE 52
RELEX 170
TRANS 83

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: High-Level Symposium on Water – Bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14
(Lisbon, 2 June 2020)
- Information from the Portuguese delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Portuguese delegation on the above subject, to be dealt with under 'Any other business' at the Council (Environment) meeting on 5 March 2020.

High-Level Symposium on Water – Bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14

(Lisbon, 2 June 2020)

- Information from the Portuguese delegation -

Following the adoption of resolution 73/292 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Governments of Kenya and Portugal will co-organise the *2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development* (Ocean Conference¹). The Ocean Conference will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 2–6 June 2020 with the overarching theme of ‘scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions’.

In the framework of the Ocean Conference, the Government of Portugal, in close cooperation with the United Nations, is organising the *High-Level Symposium on Water – Bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14* on 2 June. This event will provide inputs for the 2023 UN Conference on Water² in the context of the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028³.

Taking place in the margins of the UN Ocean Conference, the High-Level Symposium on Water represents a unique opportunity to bring together decision-makers responsible for water and ocean management, with the purpose of discussing water management in an integrated manner.

¹ <https://oceanconference.un.org/#home>

² Resolution 73/226 of 20 December 2018.

³ Resolution 71/222 of 21 December 2016.

Traditionally, marine and freshwater issues have been dealt with separately, for instance in scientific and research programmes. At national level, marine and freshwater issues are usually handled by different ministries and different authorities, which often face challenges in communicating and coordinating with each other and, in some cases, even have overlapping responsibilities.

Only with stronger governance, new forms of dialogue among all those involved, and more coherent and coordinated policies, will it be possible to achieve the progress we need by 2030, with the understanding that flows from land to sea are linked as part of one major system, the complexity of which increases when river basins cross the borders of two or more countries.

Effective wastewater management, especially in coastal urban areas, is a basic prerequisite for preventing the deterioration of our oceans' quality. Universal water and sanitation services, operated according to sustainable management models, must be in place in order to guarantee people's health, social and economic growth, and environmental quality, as well as the protection of marine and coastal ecosystems.

New and renovated, stronger and more resilient infrastructure is critical to guaranteeing water and sanitation services worldwide. Adaptation to climate change also calls for increasingly resilient water infrastructure. The challenge ahead is to mobilise all stakeholders to solve the sector's financing gap and to guarantee that the solutions adopted provide real value for money.

International financial institutions have a critical role to play in this regard and must be conscious of the relevance of this integrated vision of the whole system from the source out into the sea, and must make appropriate preparations.

The High-Level Symposium offers an opportunity to address these issues, including through a holistic approach which aims to achieve SDGs 6 and 14 in an integrated way: we need to do more, and we need to do it in innovative ways.

Formal invitations including details on accreditation will be sent through the Permanent Representations in New York to all UN Member States, intergovernmental organisations, international financial institutions, associate members of the regional commissions, non-governmental organisations, civil society, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector and philanthropic organisations.
