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Chennai High-Level Principles for a Sustainable and Resilient Blue/Ocean-based Economy

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

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Annex to G20 Environment and Climate Ministers' Outcome Document & Chair's Summary 2023

Chennai High Level Principles for a Sustainable and Resilient Blue/Ocean-Based Economy

INTRODUCTION:

Building upon the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 14, as well as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, the CBD, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the BBNJ agreement under UNCLOS, the Lisbon Declaration of the UN Ocean Conference, the UNEA resolutions on plastic pollution, the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and the broader ongoing efforts of the G20 on issues related to the ocean and sustainable growth, the G20 High Level Principles for a Sustainable and Resilient Blue Economy address sustainable economic growth, protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the marine environment, social equity, gender equality, and human development. Recognising the criticality of the ocean and its resources, and the growing threats to the marine environment and biodiversity from climate change, marine pollution, unsustainable exploitation and illegal activities that affect the marine environment, the G20 High Level Principles may be implemented by the G20 members, on a voluntary basis, as per national circumstances and priorities, considering appropriate support for developing countries.

PRINCIPLE 1. Prioritise Ocean Health: Address Marine Pollution, Halt and Reverse Biodiversity Loss and Conserve Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

Coastal and marine pollution from all sources, such as from plastics, air pollutants, and other persistent pollutants, including those deriving from the maritime sector, unsustainable exploitation and illegal activities that affect the marine environment, climate change, and invasive alien species pose growing threats to coastal and marine biodiversity with significant ecological and socio-economic consequences. A Sustainable and Resilient Blue/Ocean-based Economy should contribute to the protection, conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of marine biodiversity and the health of coastal and marine ecosystems, including through increasing biodiversity friendly practices, in accordance with national circumstances and capabilities. It should also contribute to achieving the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including taking urgent action to ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas are effectively conserved and managed, and to implementing the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). A Sustainable and Resilient Blue/Ocean-based Economy should further contribute to the reduction of marine pollution of all kinds, including from land-based and sea-based activities. Actions on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, should be taken based on a comprehensive lifecycle approach that includes sustainable consumption and production, resource efficiency and circularity in the economy, scientific and socio-economic assessments, and environmentally sound management of waste. Any dumping of waste and discharge at sea must strictly observe applicable international obligations and safety standards for the prevention of marine pollution, in particular noting the importance of preventing and combatting the illegal dumping of waste and discharge at sea.

PRINCIPLE 2. Acknowledge and address the links between Ocean and Climate

A healthy ocean and its coastal and marine ecosystems are very important in our fight against climate change. In this regard, nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and other management and conservation approaches can provide co-benefits such as coping with extreme weather events and sea level rise by providing solutions for climate adaptation and serving as natural carbon sinks. Current and projected impacts of climate change adversely affect nearly all sectors of the Blue/Ocean-based Economy and also affect the ability of the ocean and its ecosystems to stabilize the Earth's climate. It is important for a Sustainable and Resilient Blue/Ocean-based Economy to recognise the ocean-climate interlinkages and the opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation through sustainable ocean-based actions, by, inter alia protecting, conserving, sustainably using, and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems; harnessing the full potential of low and zero GHG emissions energy sources including renewables; enhancing sustainability of ocean-based industries; and furthering research on the potential of safe and effective use of ocean-based carbon dioxide removal and sequestration, including on potential opportunities, and on preventing the possible risks of impacts on the environment. At the same time, taking into account the need to address existing inequalities and support those coastal communities which are vulnerable to extreme climate events, a Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Blue/Ocean-based Economy should incorporate adaptation measures, including nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and other management and conservation approaches, and technologies, informed by science, Indigenous knowledge and local perspectives, to enhance the adaptive capacity of coastal communities and the Blue/Ocean-based Economy against the impacts of climate change.

PRINCIPLE 3. Promote Social and Inter-generational Equity and Gender Equality

It is crucial for Blue/Ocean-based Economy strategies and policy frameworks to promote social equity and inter-generational equity and gender equality. Transparent and inclusive approaches are important for empowering women and communities and Indigenous Peoples, to fully and effectively participate in the planning, decision making and implementation processes through appropriate skill development and benefit from the economic opportunities provided by the sustainable Blue/Ocean-based Economy. Additionally, all communities and individuals, including Indigenous Peoples, young people, and women, should be empowered to contribute to the sustainability of the Blue/Ocean-based Economy and adopt sustainable lifestyles that reduce negative impacts on the coastal and marine environment.

PRINCIPLE 4. Promote the use of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) for an Integrated Approach to the Blue/Ocean-based Economy

A sustainable and resilient Blue Economy requires effective engagement and participation of all partners and stakeholders across all sectors. Maritime sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, ports and shipping, marine science and technology, energy, tourism, and other emerging sectors, have varying needs, ambitions, and environmental impacts. MSP is a science-based, collaborative and participatory approach for managing ocean spaces, which recognises the full array of interactions within an ecosystem, balances diverse human uses and takes into account the need for marine protection and conservation. Adopting such an ecosystem based and participatory spatial approach at the national, sub-national and regional levels, taking into account the interests of coastal countries, can contribute to (i) balancing the increasing number, diversity, and intensity of human activities with the ocean's health and thus long-term ability to provide and sustain ecosystem services; (ii) incorporating appropriate ecological, economic, social, and cultural perspectives; and (iii) supporting science and information-based management that is coordinated at the ecosystem scale. In order to be effective in the long term, it is important for marine spatial plans to take into account the changing climate and build resilience, and contribute to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and fight against pollution.

PRINCIPLE 5. Leverage Science, Technology, and Innovation

Creating a sustainable and resilient Blue/Ocean-based Economy requires a concerted focus on supporting science, technology, and innovation, building on international cooperation between scientists, public entities, businesses, and knowledge institutions. Existing and emerging technology-based, ecosystem-based, nature-based, and social innovations, informed by robust science, help generate and implement new solutions to minimise the negative impacts of maritime sectors and industries on the climate as well as marine and coastal environment, and can contribute to sustainability, resource efficiency and circular economy, reaching global net zero greenhouse gas emissions/carbon neutrality by or around mid-century, building resilience against adverse impacts of climate change, ensuring protection, conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems, halting and reversing biodiversity loss, reducing pollution, and creating opportunities for prosperity and sustainable livelihoods.

PRINCIPLE 6. Recognise, Protect, and Utilise Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge

Effective management of the coastal and marine environment requires respect for and inclusion of Indigenous and traditional knowledge, cultures, and practices, where appropriate. Indigenous and traditional knowledge can promote environmental sustainability and responsible stewardship of natural resources while recognising the relationship between humans, the ocean, and coastal and marine ecosystems. Considering Indigenous and traditional knowledge, and promoting the fair and equitable sharing of benefits should foster community stewardship, inclusion, and participatory conservation and sustainable management of the coastal and marine environment.

PRINCIPLE 7. Establish and Implement Blue/Ocean-based Economy Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

The sheer area of the ocean and the wide range of maritime activities and stakeholders presents significant challenges for monitoring and evaluating the sustainability of Blue/Ocean-based Economy activities. Additionally, the uncertainty associated with the pace and scale of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and their impacts on the coastal and marine environment, may require periodic reassessment and realignment of Blue/Ocean-based Economy implementation strategies. Establishing and implementing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including utilizing existing ones, aiming at the assessment, minimisation, and mitigation of negative impacts on the marine and coastal environment, is key to inform decision making for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient Blue/Ocean-based economy.

PRINCIPLE 8. Strengthen International Cooperation to Tackle Shared Maritime Challenges

The maritime space is inherently interconnected – activities occurring along the coastline, within the maritime zones of a country or on the high seas and in the Area[1] may impact the coastal and marine environment along distant coastlines. Therefore, ensuring a healthy ocean and the conservation and sustainable use of its resources requires strong cooperation among and between governments and relevant international bodies at all appropriate levels, including through the establishment of marine protected areas and coordination towards networks thereof, other effective area-based conservation measures, capacity building, knowledge sharing, technology, common projects and investments, and best practices.

[1] "Area" means the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction; UNCLOS (Art. 1)

PRINCIPLE 9. Enhance Ocean Finance

Ocean protection, conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of coastal and marine resources face significant financing needs. Sustainable growth in the established and emerging Blue/Ocean-based Economy sectors requires strengthening, and enhancing access to, finance, including for developing countries, from sources such as national and international, private and public, as well as identifying, eliminating, phasing out or reforming harmful incentives, including subsidies that threaten the coastal and marine environment, as appropriate. In addition, efficient and effective utilisation of existing mechanisms such as those under the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, in line with their mandates, for relevant ocean-related actions, will be essential for the protection, conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems as well as for climate change mitigation and adaptation, contributing to a sustainable and resilient Blue/Ocean-based Economy.