Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

This year is of particular significance to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. Not only are we celebrating our 60th anniversary, but we took the final steps in the preparation of the Implementation Plan of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development which is currently under consideration of the UNGA. This plan, the result of a highly participatory and dynamic process, is a robust and inclusive high-level framework setting the firm foundations needed to succeed by 2030.

The Ocean is facing multiple challenges, and its health shows signs of decline. The UN Decade is proposing a change of tack in the generation of ocean knowledge, through transformative ocean science solutions for sustainable development, connecting people and our ocean.

This mission of the Decade is based on synergies and clear principles of co-design, co-development and co-delivery in a multi-stakeholder environment, and structured around 3 objectives, 7 outcomes and 10 challenges.

There is a clear need for sustained observations, capacity development and transfer of marine technology to enable an acceleration in the generation and use of relevant ocean science for sustainable solutions. We cannot manage what we do not measure or understand.

The deep sea presents additional challenges with, in some cases, extreme knowledge gaps on seabed topography, ocean processes, dynamics and variability, deep-ocean ecosystems its associated services and vulnerabilities, with features, biodiversity and resources still undiscovered or unidentified.

For transitions to occur in response to drivers of change, we need both stakeholders responding to these drivers and researchers, innovators and developers generating niche-level innovations.

Deep ocean observation and research communities will certainly benefit from an agreed agenda to collect and synthesise high-quality scientific data during the Decade, to answer strategic questions about deep-sea. This agenda should also support and engage existing sustained observing programmes to enhance relevant deep-sea data acquisition, improve understanding of natural variability, and develop standards around the acceptable level of statistical power for monitoring

Greater understanding of deep-sea environments, and improved data quality and sharing will contribute to the 2030 Agenda, inter alia Target 14.a of SDG14 through increased scientific knowledge, developing research capacity and transferring marine technology, this greater understanding will contribute as well to complementary policy frameworks.

We need to dynamize the development of solutions-oriented tools and services for decision-makers, policy makers and managers, to

We need to promote a broad network of stakeholder engagement to catalyse new partnerships,

We need to stimulate innovation and increased access to data and technology, guaranteeing geographic, generational and gender diversity.

IOC, as a scientific and technical body, has the mandate to promote international cooperation and coordinate programmes in research, services and capacity building, in order to learn more about the nature and resources of the ocean and to apply that knowledge. Its raison d'être includes collaborating with other organizations and especially with those of the UN system.

ISA, through this action plan in support of the UN Decade of Ocean Science, is bolstering its capacity and expertise to manage its mandated environmental stewardship function, highlighting fundamentals as observations, advancement of scientific knowledge, capacity development, and strengthening of alliances and partnerships.

Working together in fidelity to the comprehensive UN game plan for the ocean, under the true spirit of co-design and co-delivery of the Decade, we will jointly overcome the challenges and achieve the ocean we need for the future we want.