



The United Nations Global Compact has announced the formation of a *Business Action Platform for the Ocean*□

— a three-year global programme bringing together business, civil society, the UN and governments to advance the ocean economy and sustainable development.

The programme is part of a broader portfolio of Action Platforms introduced by the UN Global Compact to facilitate the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Global Goals.

There is a Nordic dimension to the initiative, since Norway is the first patron of the platform and Lise Kingo, the CEO & Executive Director of United Nations Global Compact is Danish. In an interview, Ms Kingo told UNRIC that the three-year programme, a follow-up to the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, is a unique opportunity for companies to leverage ocean sustainability to advance all 17 Global Goals.

How can businesses help protect the oceans, and from a business point of view, why should they?

“Long-term *ocean* well-being is vital to *societal* well-being. Yet threats such as overfishing, marine litter and acidification have put the health of the world’s oceans in a very fragile state. These risks will become our reality if we continue with “business-as-usual,”” Ms Kingo said.

“Given the magnitude of the ocean agenda, a considerable gap currently exists in adequately mobilizing the private sector to address the risks and opportunities embedded in ocean sustainability.

To address this gap, the United Nations Global Compact launched the *Business Action Platform for the Ocean* — a three-year programme for businesses and other key stakeholders to work together to effectively advance shared ocean priorities.”

If you had to name only one thing, what would be the single most important thing businesses could do to protect the oceans?

“Clearly, marine litter — plastic waste — the most rapid growing global pollution — is deteriorating the very foundation for anyone living off, on or by, the ocean. This is something that is very tangible, both for me personally and as CEO and Executive Director of this organization. Plastic waste in our ocean is something that requires a big shift, and the time to take action is now.

But with this platform, we want to encourage stakeholders to look at ocean sustainability in the holistic sense. Rather than focusing on one problem, or even one Global Goal, such as Goal 14: Life Below Water, we want to highlight how ocean health can provide solutions to broader

development challenges.

Further, we want to underscore the critical role the private sector must play in securing the health of our oceans. Maintaining healthy ocean environments is a fundamental precondition for businesses to operate in the long term, and addressing the current challenges provides a significant business opportunity. We need sustainable innovation and investments that the responsible business community can bring.”

The initiative was launched in Norway? Do the Nordic countries play a specific role?

“The Action Platform is based on a multi-stakeholder approach. The core work will be led by business, with the collaboration of other participants including United Nations agencies, civil society and thought leaders, Global Compact Local Networks and governments.

Partnerships between governments and the global business community will be critical to addressing ocean challenges through the platform. As the first patron of the Action Platform, the Government of Norway will have an important role to play, alongside other countries we look forward to engaging.”

What would you consider a success, what would be the criteria?

“The Platform has four objectives: developing a framework for leadership on the Global Goals and the ocean; inspiring partnership and local action; engaging in advocacy and public policy; and mapping and gathering new data. From these objectives, we expect to develop a set of recommendations — that the ocean industry actors agree on — to act and integrate ocean sustainability in the ocean value chain.”

After four months of outreach and consultation, a formal Action Platform launch will take place

on 8 June, World Ocean Day, at UN Headquarters in New York.