

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTRIES LISTED BELOW
DELIVERED DURING THE Executive Council of the Intergovernmental
Oceanographic Commission (IOC) - June 13-17, 2022, Paris**

I am giving this statement on behalf of Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and my own country, the United States of America.

Russian's February 24 unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine and its actions in Ukraine since constitute a clear violation of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which states that all member states shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

We believe that the Russian government's actions are a challenge to global peace and security norms, for which the United Nations is the critical foundation stone. If Russia is not held to account for its aggression against Ukraine, we put at risk the protections of the rules-based international order for all of us. As was observed during the debate at the United Nations in February, President Putin's rejection of diplomacy in favor of military action, if not forcefully met, including through holding the Russian government to account in international institutions, could significantly damage the value of multilateralism. In the context of the current situation, we believe it is therefore particularly germane to raise the issue of Russia's actions in multilateral fora such as this one.

We join UN Secretary-General Guterres's urgent plea for the Russian government to immediately withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

We call upon all parties to allow and facilitate the rapid, safe, and unhindered access of humanitarian assistance to those in need in Ukraine, to protect civilians,

including those who are humanitarian personnel and persons in vulnerable situations, including children, and to respect their rights.

We also underline our general concern over the impact of the Russian government's aggression in Ukraine on our work in this body. There has been an interruption of critical scientific work by Ukrainian scientists, such as the collection of high-quality data in support of the Black Sea Global Ocean Observing System, which is important for riparian countries and enables a better understanding of the Black Sea ecosystem. And beyond the immediate focus of this body, on related issues such as maritime safety, Russia's actions also put seafarers and shipping – as well as the sea and ocean environment -- at risk, with far-reaching ramifications for the work of other bodies, such as those dealing with food security.

In this context, we call upon the Russian government to immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and to recommit itself to the shared ideals embodied in the United Nations Charter.

Thank you.