

# Concept Note



## *Industriology: Governing Industry, AI, and Ocean Economies for Sustainable Global Futures*

Dates and Venue

26 February 2026

United Nations Headquarters, New York City



## Background and Rationale

Industry has long been a cornerstone of human progress, driving innovation, employment, and economic growth. At the same time, industrial activity has been closely linked to environmental degradation, social inequalities, and in some contexts, risks to international peace and security. In the 21st century, accelerating industrial transformation driven by artificial intelligence, digitalization, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, and the green transition has far-reaching implications that extend well beyond the economic sphere.

These dynamics are particularly visible in maritime, fisheries, and aquaculture industries, which sit at the nexus of food security, livelihoods, climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and geopolitical stability. The ocean economy sustains millions of jobs worldwide and is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 13 on climate action, and SDG 14 on life below water. Yet these sectors are under growing pressure from climate change, overexploitation of marine resources, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, increasing maritime traffic, and uneven access to technology and data.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides the overarching legal framework governing all activities in the oceans and seas, including navigation, fisheries, marine scientific research, environmental protection, and the peaceful use of maritime spaces. Within the United Nations system, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea plays a central role in supporting the implementation of the Convention, promoting coherent ocean governance, assisting States in capacity-building, and serving as the secretariat for key intergovernmental processes related to ocean affairs and maritime law.

As industrial activity in the ocean domain becomes increasingly technology-intensive and enabled by artificial intelligence, new questions arise regarding the interpretation and application of existing legal frameworks. Artificial intelligence driven vessel monitoring systems, satellite-based surveillance, automated decision-making in fisheries management, and digital platforms for maritime logistics offer significant opportunities for sustainability and compliance. At the same time, they raise complex issues related to jurisdiction, transparency, accountability, data governance, and equitable access, issues that are directly relevant to the mandate of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and to the effective implementation of the Convention.

Against this backdrop, Industriology is proposed as a multidisciplinary field of inquiry and practice that examines industry not merely as an economic activity, but as a driver of societal transformation with legal, diplomatic, and governance implications. As outlined in the foundational document, Industriology seeks to bridge science, policy, and international relations to ensure that industrial transformation contributes constructively to sustainable development, the rule of law, and international cooperation.

The 26 February 2026 event builds on this framework by focusing specifically on artificial intelligence enabled industrial transformation in maritime, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors, and by situating these developments within the legal and institutional architecture supported by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. In doing so, the session aims to contribute to ongoing United Nations efforts to ensure that innovation in ocean-based industries remains consistent with international law and advances sustainable and peaceful uses of the seas.

## Objectives

The Industriology session aims to:

- Advance Industriology as a conceptual framework for understanding and governing industrial transformation in maritime, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- Examine how artificial intelligence and digital technologies are reshaping ocean-based industries, and identify governance principles that support compliance, transparency, and equitable access, consistent with the mandates of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea.
- Explore how responsible industrial development in the ocean economy can accelerate progress across multiple Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 2, 8, 9, 13, and 14.
- Strengthen the science policy law interface by linking industrial innovation to international maritime law, evidence-based decision-making, and multilateral cooperation.
- Foster dialogue among Member States, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, other relevant United Nations entities, academia, and industry stakeholders on aligning artificial intelligence enabled industrial practices with ocean sustainability and the peaceful use of the seas.

## Relevance to the United Nations

### *Law of the Sea and Ocean Governance*

The session complements the work of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea by examining how emerging industrial and artificial intelligence driven practices in maritime, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors interact with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It provides a space to reflect on implementation challenges, capacity-building needs, and the evolving governance landscape, while reaffirming the centrality of the Convention as the legal foundation for all ocean activities.

### *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

Industriology advances SDG 9 and reinforces its interlinkages with ocean sustainability under SDG 14, climate action under SDG 13, food security under SDG 2, and inclusive economic growth under SDG 8.

### *Artificial Intelligence Governance and Digital Cooperation*

By focusing on sector-specific applications of artificial intelligence in ocean industries, the session contributes practical insights to broader United Nations discussions on responsible artificial intelligence, data governance, and digital inclusion.

### *Peace and Security Dimensions*

Transparent, rules-based, and sustainable industrial practices in the maritime domain can reduce tensions related to resource competition, maritime disputes, and environmental degradation, supporting conflict prevention and stability.

## *Science Policy Interface*

Industriology reinforces United Nations efforts to integrate scientific knowledge, technological innovation, and legal frameworks into coherent global governance responses.

## Format and Structure

The 26 February 2026 session will be organized as a focused, high-level dialogue, including:

- A conceptual keynote on Industriology and its relevance to ocean governance and the law of the sea.
- A moderated panel on artificial intelligence enabled maritime, fisheries, and aquaculture industries, with attention to legal and governance implications under the Convention.
- An interactive exchange with Member States, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, United Nations entities, and experts on policy pathways to align industrial innovation with ocean sustainability and international law.

## Expected Outcomes

By the conclusion of the session, the event aims to deliver:

- Enhanced awareness of Industriology as a framework that complements the work of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and supports implementation of the Convention.
- Identification of key legal, governance, and capacity-building considerations arising from artificial intelligence use in ocean-based industries.
- Policy-relevant insights to inform United Nations discussions on sustainable ocean economies, responsible artificial intelligence, and maritime governance.
- Foundations for follow-up engagement, research, and partnerships involving the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and other relevant United Nations actors.

## Strategic Significance

By explicitly linking industrial transformation, artificial intelligence governance, and ocean-based industries to the law of the sea, this session positions Industriology as a forward-looking contribution to the United Nations ocean agenda. It underscores the importance of ensuring that innovation in maritime, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors proceeds in a manner that is legally grounded, scientifically informed, and aligned with multilateral cooperation.

In doing so, the event reinforces the central role of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in guiding industrial change at sea, helping ensure that the ocean remains a space of peace, sustainability, and shared benefit for present and future generations.