Pressing issues on which I seek some Ditchley thinking:

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is currently examining the use of technical measures and regulatory frameworks to assist member countries to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The UNECE Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM), of which I am member, is working specifically on Tools and Standards for Goal 14 “Life below Water”. Our experience from many other sectors is that these are key to turning policy into effect.

Despite the welcome growth of interest internationally, the Ditchley Conference brief and UK Foresight paper bring out the difficulty of focussing towards internationally viable solutions. Two key requirements I see emerging are:

- specific routes to effective multilateral governance, perhaps learning from Climate Change experience

- from the multitude of scientific research opportunities, identifying which should be prioritised to underpin new regulated tools and standards

Both these are to be addressed at a joint conference at Reykavik, Iceland in October with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) - a global organization that develops science and advice to support the sustainable use of the oceans. I hope that I can take some thoughts on them from Ditchley to chairing at the conference.

Simon Webb