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Since 2009, Alan Simcock has been Joint Coordinator of the United Nations Group of Experts for the global integrated assessment of the ocean. He was born in Plymouth, Devon, and educated at Plymouth College, at Oxford University (Exeter College) and at the Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies (mainly economics and statistics). From 1965, he worked on a variety of issues in the United Kingdom Department of the Environment. He also served as Private Secretary to successive UK Prime Ministers from 1969 to 1972. From 1991 to 2001, he was head of the Marine Environment Division of the DOE. In addition, he was Chairman of an intergovernmental body – the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic from 1996 to 2000, and was Co-Chair of the UN Informal Consultative Process on the Oceans and Law of the Sea for three years from 2000. From 2001 to 2006, he was Executive Secretary (chief executive) of the OSPAR Commission.