



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 March 2020

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a letter, dated 2 March 2020, from H.E. Ms. Ngedikes Olai Uludong, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Palau, and H.E. Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark, the co-facilitators overseeing the preparatory process and the intergovernmental consultations on the declaration for the 2020 United Nations Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

The aforementioned letter conveys the zero draft of the declaration, and informs that the first and second rounds of informal consultations of the process will be held on 18 March 2020, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, and on 15 April 2020, in Conference Room 1, respectively.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, flowing script that appears to read 'Tijjani Muhammad-Bande'.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK TO THE UN IN
NEW YORK
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark



2 March 2020

Excellency,

We are pleased to write to you in our capacity as co-facilitators appointed by the President of the General Assembly to oversee the preparatory process and to conclude the intergovernmental consultations on the declaration for 2020 United Nations Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

We would like to thank you for the very constructive and detailed input we received from groups of states, individual delegations and other stakeholders at the Preparatory Meeting held on February 4-5.

Based on these inputs, we are pleased to enclose the zero draft of the declaration. We have the pleasure to invite you to the first informal consultations, which will be held on March 18 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 6:00pm in the Trusteeship Council. If there is a need to continue our discussions on the zero draft, we will have the opportunity to do so the following day, on March 19, also in the Trusteeship Council.

After the first round of informal consultations we will circulate a revised draft, and will invite you to a second round of informal consultations on April 15 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 6:00pm in Conference Room 1 and, if needed, on April 16, also in Conference Room 1.

We are committed to an open, inclusive, transparent process, and count on your support and your active and constructive engagement. We stand available to meet with Member States throughout the process, and encourage you to reach out to us at your convenience.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Ms. Ngedikes Olai Uludong
Permanent Representative of Palau
to the United Nations

Mr. Martin Bille Hermann
Permanent Representative of Denmark
to the United Nation

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Our ocean, our future, our responsibility

1. We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives meeting in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June 2020 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”, with the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, reaffirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our oceans, seas and marine resources. Greater ambition is required at all levels to address the dire state of the ocean. As leaders and representatives of our Governments, we are determined to act decisively and urgently to improve the health and productivity of the ocean. [\[Based on A/RES/71/312, OP1\]](#)
2. We reaffirm the commitments made in the declaration, entitled “Our ocean, our future: call for action” adopted by the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, held from 5 to 9 June 2017. [\[New language\]](#)
3. We recognize that the ocean is fundamental to life on our planet and our future. The ocean is an important source of our planet's biodiversity and plays a vital role in the climate system and water cycle. The ocean supplies us with oxygen to breathe, contributes to food security and to decent jobs and livelihoods and plays an essential role in sustainable development, a sustainable ocean-based economy and poverty eradication. We underline the interlinkages and synergies between Goal 14 and the other Goals of the 2030 Agenda, which is integrated and indivisible in its nature. [\[Based on A/RES/71/312, OP3\]](#)
4. We are therefore deeply alarmed by the global emergency facing the ocean. Sea levels are rising, the ocean is warmer and more acidic. Plastic pollution continues to enter the ocean at an alarming rate, a third of fish stocks are now overexploited, and half of all living coral has been lost. While progress has been made towards the achievement of some targets of Goal 14, action is not advancing at the speed or scale required to meet our goals. The most urgent example of this is the lack of success in achieving the four targets under Goal 14 that mature this year, and we reiterate our commitment to achieving these targets and our determination to go further as we set new targets. [\[Based on A/74/630, para 98\]](#)
5. We reaffirm that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and are alarmed by the adverse effects of climate change on the ocean, including the rise in ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, deoxygenation, sea level rise, shifts in fish distribution and decrease in fish stocks, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events, as established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its special report entitled *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*. We emphasize that mitigation of and adaptation to climate change represent an immediate and urgent priority to ensuring the health of the ocean and thus our future. [\[Based on A/RES/74/3, OP11, A/RES/73/232, OP1 A/RES/71/312, OP4 + new language\]](#)
6. We are alarmed by the findings about cumulative human impacts on the ocean, including ecosystem degradation, species extinctions and the need for transformative change, as established by the

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services *Global Assessment Report*. We are committed to halting and reversing the decline in the ocean's ecosystems and to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity. [New language + language from A/RES/71/312, OP5]

7. We reaffirm that the Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. [Based on A/RES/74/19]
8. We recognize the importance of the work undertaken by the intergovernmental conference to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. [New language]
9. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and its vision aimed at achieving the science we need for the ocean we want. We support the Decade's mission to generate and use knowledge for the transformational action needed to achieve a healthy, safe and resilient ocean for sustainable development by 2030 and beyond. We fully support the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in preparing and implementing the Decade and commit to supporting these efforts. [New language]
10. We stress that science-based and innovative actions can provide the solutions necessary to overcome challenges in achieving Goal 14 in the following ways: [New language]
 - a. Informing integrated ocean management, planning and decision-making, through improving our understanding of the impact of cumulative human activities on the ocean and anticipating the impacts of planned activities and minimize their negative effects, [New language]
 - b. Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and minimizing waste, by-catch and discards, in order to restore fish stock to levels that produce maximum sustainable yield targets, through the use of communication tools and other technological tools for monitoring and tracking, [New language]
 - c. Reducing marine pollution, including marine plastic litter and nutrient pollution, contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches that include improved waste management and developing new, biodegradable materials that can reduce additional marine plastic litter, [New language]
 - d. Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, through assessing their ecological value and contribution to a healthy ocean, [New language]
 - e. Developing and implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including through increasing the use of ocean-based renewable energy technologies, implementing

nature-based solutions for carbon sequestration, preventing coastal erosion and preparing for ocean-related extreme weather events, [New language]

11. We commit to taking the following science-based and innovative actions on an urgent basis, recognizing that all developing countries, and in particular small island developing states and least developed countries, face capacity challenges that need to be addressed: [New language]

- a. Strengthen national data collection efforts and improve the timely sharing and dissemination of data and knowledge, including by making data widely accessible through open access databases, investing in national statistical systems, standardizing data, ensuring interoperability between databases, and synthesizing data into information for policy- and decision-makers, [Based on A/74/630, para 76 and A/RES/74/4, OP27(i)]
- b. Enhance international cooperation to support developing countries in addressing their constraints in access to technology, including through strengthening science, technology and innovation infrastructure, domestic innovation capabilities, absorptive capacities and the capacity of national statistical systems, in particular in the most vulnerable countries, which face the greatest challenges in collecting, analyzing and using reliable data and statistics, [From E/FFDF/2019/3, OP24 and from A/RES/74/4]
- c. Establish effective partnerships, including multi-stakeholder, public-private, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary partnerships, including by incentivizing the sharing of good practices, giving visibility to well-performing partnerships and creating space for meaningful interaction and networking, [New language]
- d. Explore, develop and promote innovative financing solutions for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies, including through public-private sector partnerships and capital market instruments, and providing technical assistance to enhance the bankability and feasibility of projects, [New language]
- e. Recognize the important complementary role of traditional knowledge held by indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the role of social science in planning, decision-making and implementation, [based on A/RES/74/19, OP301]
- f. Empower women, as they play a critical role in progressing towards a sustainable ocean-based economy and are key to achieving Goal 14, and mainstream a gender perspective in our work to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and its resources, [New language]
- g. Ensure that children, youth and adults are empowered with relevant knowledge and skills that enable them to understand the importance of and the need to contribute to the health of the ocean through promoting and supporting quality education and life-long learning for ocean literacy, [Partly based on A/RES/74/4, OP27(h)]
- h. Increase cooperation at the global, regional and sub-regional levels in order to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices with regard to science and innovation; [New language]

- i. Strengthen the science-policy interface for implementing Goal 14 and its targets, to ensure that policy is informed by the best-available science, and to highlight policies and actions that may be scalable, through processes such as the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, [\[New language\]](#)
12. We commit to implementing our respective voluntary commitments made in the context of the Conference and urge those who have made voluntary commitments at the 2017 Conference to provide updates on their progress. [\[New language\]](#)
13. We request the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support the implementation of Goal 14 in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by enhancing inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, taking into consideration the work of UN-Oceans. [\[A/RES/71/312, OP14\]](#)
14. We know that the ocean is critical for our planet, our lives and our future. We know the ocean we want. We call upon all stakeholders to take ambitious and concerted action to accelerate implementation to achieve Goal 14 by 2030. [\[New language\]](#)