



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 March 2020

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a letter, dated 13 March 2020, from H.E. Ms. Ngedikes Olai Uludong, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Palau to the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, the co-facilitators tasked to oversee the preparatory process and to conclude the intergovernmental consultations on the declaration for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

The letter informs of the decision to cancel the informal consultations on the zero-draft declaration, hitherto scheduled for 18 and 19 March 2020, and to substitute it with a new format. In accordance with the new format, delegations are invited to send the statements they would have delivered at the informal consultations in writing to the emails listed in the letter. The deadline for sending statements is **19 March 2020, at 6:00 p.m.**

The decision to adopt a new format was taken in light of the rapidly evolving situation of the global spread of COVID-19 and its impact on public health, as well as the need to take measures to curb the spread of the disease and to safeguard the health of colleagues.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a flourish.

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



13 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.

In light of the current COVID-19 situation, the most important priority for us is to ensure the health and safety of our colleagues. We have therefore decided that we will not convene informal consultations in person as scheduled on March 18 and 19. At the same time, we will do our best to make sure that the negotiations on the political declaration can move ahead.

As an alternative to meeting in person, we invite all delegations to send the statements that you would have delivered at the informal consultations, to us in writing. We are grateful for the trust you have placed in us as co-facilitators to hold the pen in this process. When delivering your input, we therefore ask you not to enter into drafting discussions and instead to comment on the substance and elements of the text. The deadline for sending the statements to us will be **March 19 2020 at 6pm**.

In addition to submitting your statement, if you would like to speak to us directly, we stand ready to do so and encourage you to reach out to us at your convenience.

Since we will not be meeting in person next week, allow us to say a few words about the zero draft for the declaration that was circulated on 2 March 2020.

In developing the zero draft, we were guided by our mandate, as set out in resolution 73/292, to prepare a brief, concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally agreed declaration that focuses on, and highlights, the science-based and innovative areas of action to support the implementation of Goal 14. We have attempted to capture the views expressed by Member States at the Preparatory Meeting concerning what you would like to see reflected in the declaration.

As requested by many Member States during the Preparatory Meeting, we have chosen to “reaffirm” the commitments made in the 2017 Call for Action, in order to avoid renegotiating the agreements we reached in 2017. As requested by Member States in our previous consultations, we have made an effort to offer you a focused document that is clear on the actions we need to take.

While we have done our best to include as many of your requested elements in the zero draft as possible, we have also been conscious of the wish expressed by most Member States that the text should be brief, concise- and action-oriented. We ask you to keep this wish in mind as we move forward.

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



We would kindly ask you to send your written statements to Mira Bergem (Denmark) at mirber@um.dk and Rasmus Jarak Nexø Jensen (Denmark) at rasjen@um.dk and to Nick Chan (Palau) at nickchan@hotmail.com and Joan Kamikamica (Palau) at kamikamicajoan@gmail.com. Kindly also copy the Secretariat, at chatterjeem@un.org. Please also get in touch with our experts regarding setting up meetings.

For the sake of transparency, all statements will be published on the Conference website.

We are committed to an open, inclusive, transparent process, and count on your support and your active and constructive engagement, even more so in light of these changed circumstances.

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 Nations

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