

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA ON THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE DECLARATION FOR THE  
2020 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
SDG14 – March 23, 2020**

I have the honour to submit this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, the Group wishes to thank the co-facilitators for preparing a concise action oriented declaration which reflects several issues that the Group believes are important in ensuring the health, productivity and resilience of our oceans and seas. In this regard, the Group has prepared a number of language proposals, which are attached to this statement. We would, however, wish to highlight the following issues:

1. The Group would also like to propose a splitting and reordering of paragraph 3 and the creation of a 3 bis and a new 3 ter.
2. With respect to 3 ter, we believe that there are a number intergovernmental processes which closely relate to the objectives of the Conference and as such should be reflected in the Declaration. Accordingly, the Group would like to propose that the Declaration references the initiative of the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its fourteenth meeting, to promote a coherent approach between the Rio Conventions (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa) to address biodiversity loss, climate change and land ad ecosystem degradation.
3. We also note that there are no references to the cultural significance of the ocean in the declaration. We have, therefore, made a language proposal about the cultural as well as natural significance of the ocean for inclusion in paragraph 3bis. We have made a similar proposal in paragraph 11(l). In addition, we would recommend that para 3bis retains ILO language which calls for decent work.
4. With regard to paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 we have proposed some minor changes to the text as reflected in the attached submission. With respect to paragraph 8, we believe that the text could be strengthened to reflect the need to maintain the momentum for concluding our BBNJ negotiations as soon as possible.
5. The Group also has some textual and language proposals in respect of paragraph (10) and its sublittoral paragraphs. We would like to highlight a few of them. With regard to subparagraph 10 (b), the Group wishes to see a reference to the need to effectively implement flag State and relevant Port State obligations. With regard to 10 (d), we would like to encourage a reference to the wider spectrum of area based management tools such as integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning as well as applying the precautionary and ecosystem approaches. As such, we have proposed a new (d). We would also like to see a rewording of paragraph 10 (c) and have proposed a new 10 (f) 10 (g) and 10 (h) to address, *inter alia*, issues such as providing technical assistance and capacity

building to small scale and artisanal fishers in developing countries as well as developing research capacity and access to technology to ensure access to high seas fishing, which are of critical importance to the Group.

6. With regard to paragraph 11, the Group would wish to reserve its position on the chapeau at this time, as it is still being considered by the Group. However, the Group has a number of proposals with regard to the sublittoral paragraphs –
  - a. First, we would like to propose a reordering of these paragraphs as indicated in the attachment.
  - b. Second, with respect to current paragraph 11 (a), the Group proposes the inclusion of a reference to LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, Coastal African Member States as well as Middle Income Countries.
  - c. Third, we have proposed new language for paragraph 11 (d) and a new paragraph 11 (c) that *invites* member states, international organisations, foundations and the private sector to provide voluntary financial contributions and technical assistance to the Technology Bank for LDCs to increase their capacity to develop sustainable ocean-based technologies.
  - d. Fourth, we would like to propose new sub-paragraphs 11 (g), 11 (j), 11 (m), 11 (n) and 11 (p) which address the issues of (i) the importance of providing the necessary means for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; (ii) dedicating greater resources to marine scientific research necessary to increasing our knowledge of the ocean and to better understand the relationship between climate change and the health and productivity of the ocean; (iii) ensuring that persons with disabilities and persons in vulnerable situations are provided with the necessary services to enable their knowledge and information on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans; (iv) prohibiting certain forms of fisheries subsidies that inter alia contribute to overcapacity and overfishing as well as refraining from introducing further subsidies, while recognising that effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developing countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiation and (v) providing capacity development and technical assistance for developing countries to enable and enhance their access to marine resources .
  
7. Finally, with respect to paragraph 12, the Group would like to see the paragraph strengthened by calling on member states, international organisations and the private sector to provide assistance to countries that are constrained by capacity and resource gaps.

In closing, the Group looks forward to working with you and other member States in reaching agreement on an ambitious, action oriented political declaration given the real challenges facing our Ocean. Equally, the Group wishes to assure you of its continued support during this very difficult time for the international community. In this regard, we would appreciate an indication of the next steps in the process and proposed timelines.