

Statement of New Zealand on the zero draft of the political declaration for the 2020 United Nations Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

Craig J Hawke, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations

19 March 2020 (submitted by email)

Dear co-facilitators,

At the outset, let me express our profound gratitude for the hard work you, and your teams, have undertaken in preparing the zero draft of the political declaration. We are also grateful for your continued efforts to progress negotiations by remote means.

In New Zealand's view, the zero draft represents a good starting point in reflecting our collective ambition to implement Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14). We are broadly comfortable with the structure and content of the zero draft, but we do have some comments and suggestions.

We are strongly supportive of paragraph 2, which reaffirms the commitments made in the declaration, "Our ocean, our future: call for action". New Zealand would also support a strengthening of this paragraph to reaffirm the declaration itself, as well as the commitments contained therein.

Paragraph 4 is of particular importance to New Zealand. We support the framing of the situation facing the ocean as a global emergency, and the need to express our deep alarm. We are grateful for the inclusion of language reiterating our commitment to achieving the SDG14 targets maturing in 2020, and we consider that it would be valuable to explicitly list those targets.

In the second line of paragraph 5, New Zealand proposes adding a reference to the adverse effects of carbon dioxide to the existing reference to adverse effects of climate change on the ocean. This would be to more accurately reflect the cause of ocean acidification.

In light of the recent postponement of the fourth session of the BBNJ intergovernmental conference, New Zealand would suggest that paragraph 8 could be further strengthened to emphasise the need for active engagement and to agree a robust and effective treaty as soon as possible.

New Zealand supports the remainder of the zero draft, but we would like to express our particularly strong support for: the reference to cumulative impacts in paragraphs 6; the link to the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in paragraph 9; paragraph 10, especially the referenced to combatting IUU and reducing marine litter; the commitments contained in paragraph 11 and the reference to

traditional knowledge in 11(e); and the commitment to implement and update progress on voluntary commitments in paragraph 12.

We remain ready to participate in further discussions on the draft declaration, and look forward to engaging with other delegations by the most appropriate means.

Thank you.