

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION EUROPE

Inputs to the zero draft of UN Ocean 2020 conference declaration

17 March 2020

GENERAL COMMENTS

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION EUROPE (SFE) welcomes the zero draft of the conference declaration under the leadership of Denmark and Palau. Our Ocean is one and global and affected by issues – from overfishing, habitat degradation, and loss, to pollution and overall land-based pressures, including from agriculture, exploitation of resources of the sea and climate change - that require ambitious collective action at the highest level, including at UN level through well designed and fully achieved sustainable development goals.

Key progress has been achieved thanks to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Yet, further actions are needed at the international level to protect, restore and improve the health and resilience of the Ocean. As confirmed by the IPCC report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate and latest scientific studies, our Ocean is facing unprecedented changes and the political decisions we take now are critical. These actions should be based on the latest scientific knowledge and environmental projections for the Ocean and guided by the precautionary principle. The Ocean is home to an incredible biodiversity from the largest animal on the planet to living species invisible to human eyes and provides us with no less than food, oxygen but also culture, recreation and wellbeing. It is indeed our responsibility to protect the Ocean, our present and future depend on it.

In this regard, Surfrider Europe regrets the zero draft includes no mention at all to reducing our resources consumption or to our overuse of plastics. Surfrider Europe in addition strongly opposes the specific reference to developing biodegradable materials as an option or way to go to reduce marine plastic pollution while prevention and reuse are not even mentioned. In no way, biodegradable material if referring to biodegradable plastic are a valid solution to plastic pollution. So called biodegradable plastics do not degrade in real conditions and in all environmental compartments including the ocean but in composting facilities and in an acceptable/reasonable range of time and is misleading in many aspects in the way biodegradable plastics are marketed and/or understood by consumers. Surfrider Europe is also very concerned that no mention of limiting our emissions, including from shipping nor stopping the extraction of fossil fuels at sea is made in the text and asks for a specific inclusion of these two necessary steps to protect our ocean in a changing climate, given the unprecedented impacts and changes our ocean and planet are facing.

SPECIFIC INPUTS

Paragraph 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 *manage* our *ocean*, 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 **and restore** the health and **resilience** of the ocean.

Paragraph 10

10. We stress that science-based and **regulatory** actions can provide the solutions necessary to overcome challenges in achieving Goal 14 in the following ways: [New language]

Paragraph 10, c.

c. Reducing marine pollution, including **land and sea-based sources of** marine plastic litter and nutrient pollution, contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches that include **reducing plastic use, incentivising reuse systems and materials, reusable, refillable and repairable products, limiting single use plastics, restricting microplastic ingredients in products, as well as over and unnecessary packaging, preventing microplastic releases from pellets, tyres and textiles**, improved waste management and **limiting waste exports. As far as marine plastic pollution is concerned, this could be successfully achieved through supporting the adoption of a global convention on plastics and addressing at international level waste coming from shipping including the loss of containers at sea.**

Paragraph 10, d.

d. Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, through assessing their ecological value and contribution to a healthy ocean and **increasing their geographical coverage and the level of protection and means they benefit from,**

Paragraph 10, e.

e. Developing and implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including through **reducing emissions including from shipping**, increasing the use of ocean-based renewable energy technologies **and limiting fossil energy extraction at sea**, implementing nature-based solutions for carbon sequestration, preventing coastal erosion and preparing for ocean-related extreme weather events,

About Surfrider Foundation Europe

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION EUROPE is a non-profit organisation whose purpose is to protect and showcase the importance of lakes, rivers, the ocean, waves, and coastlines. It currently has over 15,000 members and is active across 12 European countries through its volunteer-run branches. For 30 years, Surfrider Foundation Europe has been taking action in three areas of expertise: marine litter, water quality and public health, coastal management and climate change. Surfrider Foundation Europe is registered to the UN. Surfrider Foundation Europe is a member of the international Surfrider network with members in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Morocco, and the United States of America. Surfrider Europe is also a founding member of the Ocean and Climate Platform, of the Rethink Plastic Alliance and of the Beyond Plastic Med coalition. Surfrider is also part of the Break Free From Plastic Movement.

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