



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

29 April 2020

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to convey herewith a letter dated 29 April 2020, from H.E. Ms. Ngedikes Olai Uludong, Permanent Representative of Palau, and H.E. Mr. Martin Bille Herman, Permanent Representative of Denmark, the co-facilitators tasked with overseeing the preparatory process and concluding the intergovernmental consultations on the declaration for the 2020 United Nations (UN) Ocean Conference.

The aforementioned letter transmits the revised draft of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference Declaration, which captures the written inputs submitted by Member States. It also informs that the co-facilitators will not convene a second round of informal consultations, and the negotiation process will be put on hold, until new dates are proposed for the Conference, including a new time line for the preparatory process.

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

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

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*



28 April 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 your constructive engagement with the zero draft that was circulated on 2 March 2020. We deeply appreciate the flexibility you have shown with regards to adapting to a process of written submissions of the statements you would have otherwise delivered in person. For the sake of transparency, your statements, as well as those of stakeholders, have been posted by the Secretariat on the 2020 UN Ocean Conference website, and we invite you to review the statements made by other delegations, to advance our common understanding of each others' positions

With reference to the letter from the President of the General Assembly dated 13 April, it has been decided that the Conference will be postponed to a later date, in accordance with General Assembly decision 74/548. Despite the postponement of the Conference co-hosts Portugal and Kenya expressed their hope that 'substantial preparatory work should continue as feasible in the present circumstances'.

With regards to the negotiations for the political declaration, it has been important to us as co-facilitators to recognize the substantial work Member States have put into preparing input to the zero draft and to build on the extensive input we have received from a large number of delegations and regional groups. At the same time, we acknowledge that it is not appropriate to conclude the negotiations at this stage, given the uncertainty regarding the new dates for the Conference.

We have therefore prepared a revised draft of the political declaration, circulated together with this letter, which captures the input Member States have submitted to the zero draft. However, we will not convene a second round of informal consultations at the point, and we will put the negotiation process on hold until the co-hosts, in consultation with the President of the General Assembly, are ready to propose new dates for the Conference and a new timeline for the preparatory process.

In this revised draft, we have attempted to reflect the input we have received as well as possible. However, we recognize that there may be outstanding issues that require further discussions. Additionally, the treatment of some themes in the declaration, especially as they relate to other processes, will be determined by the timing of the Conference. We assure you that there will be an opportunity to have these discussions at the next informal consultations, to be conducted closer to the new dates of the Conference.

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

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out, should you have questions regarding the above. 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 Nations

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 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 the 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 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 to our future. The ocean is an important source of the 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, nutrition, and to decent jobs and livelihoods, provides a means for maritime transportation, forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage, 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 Sustainable Development Goals, and recognize that the implementation of Goal 14 can contribute significantly to the realization 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 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 progress towards achieving the four targets under Goal 14 that mature in 2020, and we commit to taking further action to achieve all targets as soon as possible. [\[Based on A/74/630, para 98\]](#)
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,

decrease in some fish stocks and other marine biodiversity, as well as coastal erosion and extreme weather events, as established highlighted 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, productivity and resilience of the ocean and thus our future. [Based on A/RES/774/3, OP11, A/RES/73/232, OPI A/RES/71/312, OP4 + new language]

6. We are deeply concerned by the findings about cumulative human impacts on the ocean, including ecosystem degradation and species extinctions and we recognize the need for transformative change, as highlighted 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 health of the ocean's ecosystems and biodiversity and to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and its call to support and scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. [New language + language from A/RES/71/312, OP5; on DER A/RES/73/284]
7. We reaffirm that the Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out. [Based on A/RES/74/19]
8. We also 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 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 eliminating or minimizing their negative effects, [New language]

- b. Restoring fish stock to levels that produce at maximum sustainable yield and minimizing waste, unwanted by-catch and discards, through combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing including through the use of communication tools and other technological tools for monitoring, control and surveillance, as well as through the use of ecosystem-based fisheries management that protect essential habitats and promote collaborative processes for decision-making that include all stakeholders, including small-scale and artisanal fisheries, [New language]
  - c. Reducing marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including nutrient pollution, untreated wastewater, solid waste discharges and hazardous substances, as well as sea-based activities such as noise pollution, through improving our understanding of their sources, pathways and impacts on marine ecosystems, and through contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches, that include improved waste management, [New language]
  - d. Eliminating long-term discharges of marine plastic litter and microplastics into the ocean, including through developing new materials for consumer and industrial uses that can fully and effectively biodegrade in order to reduce inputs of marine plastic litter, innovation in product design, and by embracing a common global vision to reduce additional marine plastic litter pollution to zero, [New language + UNEP/EA.3/Res.7]
  - e. Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning, through, inter alia, assessing their ecological, social and cultural value and applying the precautionary and ecosystem-based approach, in accordance with national legislation and international law, [New language]
  - f. Developing and implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and enhancing resilience, including through increasing the use of renewable energy technologies, especially ocean-based technologies, preparing for ocean-related extreme weather events, and implementing nature-based solutions for, inter alia, carbon sequestration and preventing coastal erosion, [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 international, regional, sub-regional and 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 cooperation at the global, regional, sub-regional and national level in order to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices within marine scientific research and 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, interdisciplinary and scientific 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, provide technical assistance to enhance the bankability and feasibility of projects, as well as mainstream the values of marine natural capital into decision-making, [New language]
- e. Recognize the important role of traditional and local knowledge, innovation and practices 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 and girls, as their equal participation is key in progressing towards a sustainable ocean-based economy and 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 people, especially children and youth, 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, including in decision-making, through promoting and supporting quality education and life-long learning for ocean literacy, [Partly based on A/RES/74/4, OP27(h)]

- h. Strengthen the science-policy interface for implementing Goal 14 and its targets, to ensure that policy is informed by the best-available science, and as relevant, traditional knowledge, 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, through the work of UN-Oceans. [\[A/RES/71/312, OP14\]](#)
14. We know that a healthy, productive and resilient ocean is critical for our planet, our lives and our future. We call upon all stakeholders to take ambitious and concerted action to accelerate implementation to achieve Goal 14 by 2030.