

## NMEA Statement to the United Nations at the Prep Meeting for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

Thank you, Co-facilitators, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The National Marine Educators Association, NMEA, is honored to be a part of this Preparatory Meeting for the 2020 Ocean Conference to help support the effective implementation of SDG 14.

Founded in the United States in 1976, NMEA is a member-based organization of classroom teachers, informal educators, professors, scientists, government agencies and other stakeholders from around the world working together to advance the understanding of our freshwater and marine ecosystems. Our NMEA members represent over 300 organizations and more than 20 countries. NMEA is powered by over 20 national committees and 16 regional organizations who provide the on-the-ground efforts that support and promote national and international initiatives. We leverage our impact through strong partnerships with other marine education associations and networks around the world.

We second earlier comments about the need to channel the energy of youth movements and create pathways for youth leadership, as well as the inclusion of traditional knowledge and underrepresented communities. However, we encourage a more prominent focus on ocean literacy throughout *all* the interactive dialogues at the UN Ocean Conference. The importance of global ocean literacy must be emphasized to effectively implement SDG 14. Ocean literacy should be the *foundation* of all SDG 14 efforts. It is imperative that we enhance ocean literacy around the world so people understand their influence on the ocean and the ocean's influence on them. Through strong partnerships, we can work together to establish an ocean literate society to ensure the success of SDG 14 and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

To learn more about the essential principles and fundamental concepts of ocean sciences, please visit the NMEA website ([oceanliteracynmea.org](http://oceanliteracynmea.org)) to view the Ocean Literacy Guide. The Guide has been translated and adapted for different regions throughout the world. It is the foundation of everything we have been talking about for the past two days. If you have not read it, please do. We support Ocean Literacy for All.

Thank you.