

New Zealand interventions at the Preparatory Meeting for the UN Oceans Conference

On the themes for the interactive dialogues

Thank you co-facilitators,

Let me begin by reiterating New Zealand's strong and enduring support for SDG 14, as well as the importance we place on the UN Oceans Conference as a vehicle to raise awareness about problems facing the ocean and to mobilise action. The first conference was successful in this regard and we have high ambition for the second UN Ocean Conference.

In particular, New Zealand would like to see the Conference bring a continued and renewed focus on the four SDG 14 targets due to mature in 2020. In connection with this, we draw specific attention to the urgent need to successfully conclude WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations by June 2020.

We would also like the Conference to take an inclusive approach to science-based and innovative areas of action, and to recognise the important role that traditional knowledge plays in ocean management.

New Zealand considers that the Conference presents an opportunity to build momentum and energy for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, and for the continued implementation of SDG14 in Small Island Developing States, who rely heavily on a healthy and sustainably managed ocean for livelihoods and well-being.

New Zealand thanks the Secretary-General for his background note, and endorses the proposed themes for the interactive dialogues. We also emphasise the need to take stock of existing commitments and actions in relation to each of the seven substantive themes.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that New Zealand will be making a contribution to the voluntary trust fund to support developing country participation at the Conference. We encourage all others in a position to do so to also make contributions, in order to ensure full and inclusive participation at the Conference.

Thank you.

On elements for the political declaration

Thank you co-facilitator,

New Zealand aligns itself with the statement delivered by Tuvalu on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

New Zealand considers that science-based and innovative areas of action that could be reflected in the declaration include circular economy principles, and monitoring and data.

We are of the view that current production and consumption models are unsustainable. We hope that the declaration can encourage circular economy principles, where waste is designed out, products are made to last and be repaired, and resources are recovered, rather than sent to landfill. This type of shift requires innovation, and will help address the growing amount of pollution and debris accumulating in our marine environment.

The ability to access and interpret data is crucial to advance science-based and innovative action. New Zealand would like to see the declaration advancing action in this area, by encouraging institutions such as the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science which support access to and the development of science, including traditional knowledge, research capacity and marine technology.

New Zealand is of the view that the declaration can also advance action for integrated assessments. We see value in filling gaps in our understanding of the ocean on a global level. The declaration could emphasise the ongoing value of existing integrated mechanisms such as the World Ocean Assessment and encouraging member states to contribute to and use the outputs of such mechanisms in their decision-making.

New Zealand believes that the international community can leverage synergies through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Partnerships with the private sector, local communities and other stakeholders are valuable opportunities to identify and implement innovative solutions to support SDG 14. We hope the declaration will emphasise the importance of inclusive partnerships.

New Zealand would also like to see the declaration leverage synergies through international cooperation to ensure a healthy and sustainably managed ocean, including by encouraging coherence and minimising duplication between initiatives.

Finally, we would like to see a specific commitment to achieve the four 2020 targets in the declaration, and we are also supportive of language encouraging science-based and innovative areas of action to consider cumulative impacts on the marine environment.

Thank you.