

## Remarks

**By the co-facilitators of the agreed declaration**

**Of the OCEAN conference**

Preparatory Meeting, February 4 AM

### **[Ambassador Uludong of Palau]**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I call to order the first meeting of the preparatory meeting for the 2020 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 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/292. 

Ambassador Martin Billie Hermann of Denmark and I, 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 a brief, concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally agreed declaration, would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence at the podium of:

- the President of the General Assembly;
- the Minister of Sea of Portugal;

- the Principal Secretary for Fisheries, Aquaculture and the Blue Economy of Kenya;
- the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, representing the Legal Counsel who is the Special Adviser to the Presidents of the Conference on oceans and legal matters;
- the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs; and
- the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Ocean.

We also welcome all stakeholders participating in the Preparatory meeting as observers, including organizations and bodies of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, other interested international bodies and non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector and philanthropic organizations. We invite you all to register new Voluntary Commitments to contribute to the success of the 2020 Ocean Conference.

2020 has been coined as a ‘super-year’ for nature. As I always say, we are all in one canoe, sailing onwards towards a sustainable ocean. I think of this second UN Ocean Conference process as another potentially powerful oar in our journey alongside the BBNJ and CBD oars. Our UNOC oar is at a less advanced stage of progress than these other oars, but with your support and engagement, Ambassador Hermann and I are

ready to raise our sails, check the wind and set our course towards the sustainable ocean that we need.

I now give the floor to my fellow Co-Facilitator, Ambassador Hermann of Denmark

**[Ambassador Hermann of Denmark]**

Excellencies, Distinguished, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is great to see so many of you here today. Ambassador Olai and I have very much been looking forward to this meeting, which is the first chance for us to hear from all of you.

The Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June will be of critical importance. As was made clear by the Secretary-General's Background note, our oceans are facing a global emergency. Sea levels are rising, plastic pollution is increasing, the ocean is warmer and more acidic, fish stocks are overexploited and half of all living coral has been lost.

Oceans, seas and marine resources are critical to sustainable development, including sustainable ocean-based economies and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole. They underpin poverty eradication and food security and support the well-being of humans and planet.

As the Secretary-General reminded us in his background note, oceans are inextricably linked with climate change, regulating the global climate by acting as a giant sink for greenhouse gases. Ocean warming and

deoxygenation, sea-level rise and ocean acidification are increasingly adversely affecting the oceans and their resources.

We need greater urgency and greater ambition at all levels if we are to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14. We need more truly innovative, entrepreneurial and science-based approaches to ocean and coastal restoration and protection. It is our sincere hope that all Member States have come prepared to this meeting with concrete and ambitious ideas that will bring us closer to our common goal of achieving SDG 14.

**[Ambassador Uludong of Palau].**

At the 2017 Ocean Conference, we adopted the declaration “Our ocean, our future: call for action” which showcased to the world our strong commitment to implementation of SDG14. The conference has significantly raised global awareness of the problems facing the oceans and seas and catalyzed nearly 1400 voluntary commitments, the number of which is still growing today.

Since the 2017 Ocean Conference, various actions have been undertaken at all levels in support of the implementation of SDG14. However, progress is uneven among countries and regions depending on availability of science and innovation, capacity-building and financing as well as the level of inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation. Inadequate data collection and disaggregation remain a huge barrier to implementation of most targets of SDG14.

Science and innovation are essential tools of addressing the challenges to SDG14 and to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda, hence the theme

of the 2020 Ocean Conference has been decided as “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”. Challenges can be turned into opportunities by scaling up ocean action in various areas in favour of sound science, access to necessary data and information. Science and innovation are what can raise the ambition of our ocean actions to respond to the ocean emergency that we face.

As co-facilitators, we are in your hands, and we count on your constructive engagement throughout the process and look forward to productive discussions today and tomorrow.

**[Statement by the President of the General Assembly]**

**[Ambassador Uludong of Palau]**

I now invite His Excellency Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the General Assembly, to deliver some opening remarks.

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I thank the President of the General Assembly for his statement

**[Statement by the Minister of Sea of Portugal]**

**[Ambassador Uludong of Palau].**

I now give the floor to His Excellency Ricardo da Piedade Abreu Serrão Santos, Minister of Sea of Portugal, to deliver a statement.

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I thank the Minister of Sea of Portugal for his statement.

**[Statement by the Principal Secretary of Kenya]**

**[Ambassador Uludong of Palau].**

I now give the floor to Prof. Micheni J. Ntiba, Principal Secretary for Fisheries, Aquaculture and the Blue Economy, Republic of Kenya of Kenya to deliver a statement.

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I thank the Principal Secretary of Kenya for his/her statement

**[Statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs]**

**[Ambassador Hermann of Denmark]**

I now give the floor to Mr. Stephen Mathias, Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Legal Counsel and Special Adviser to the Presidents of the Conference on oceans and legal matters, to make a statement.

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I thank Mr. Mathias for his statement.

**[Statement by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Ocean]**

**[Ambassador Hermann of Denmark]**

I now invite His Excellency Peter Thomson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Ocean, to deliver some opening remarks.

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I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Ocean for his statement

**[Ambassador Hermann of Denmark]**

As participants have been informed in our letters dated 10 December 2019 and 30 January 2020, this meeting consists of two discussions:

Firstly, on the themes for the interactive dialogues which will be held this morning immediately after the closing of the opening segment and is expected to conclude at 1 p.m. and

Secondly, on elements for a brief, concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally agreed declaration to be held from this afternoon until tomorrow afternoon.

We count on your constructive engagement throughout the process and look forward to productive discussions today and tomorrow.

I would like to remind participants that the two-day preparatory meeting is webcast.

This opening segment is now concluded.

**[Pause for podium change.]**

**[Discussion on the themes for the interactive dialogues]**

**[Ambassador Uludong of Palau].**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

We shall now turn to our discussion on the themes for the interactive dialogues. The Secretary-General's background note proposes the themes for the interactive dialogues for the Conference, which will address the challenges and opportunities in progress towards the targets in SDG14.

The proposed themes are as follows:

- 1) Addressing marine pollution
- 2) Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems
- 3) Minimizing and addressing ocean acidification
- 4) Making fisheries sustainable and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
- 5) Promoting and strengthening sustainable ocean-based economies, in particular for small island developing States and least developed countries
- 6) Increasing scientific knowledge and developing research capacity and the transfer of marine technology

- 7) Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
- 8) Leveraging interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 14 and other Goals towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

The first themes of the first seven dialogues largely correspond to the themes of the Partnership Dialogues at the 2017 Conference. Some topics have been updated to be broader in scope, more inclusive and addressing the targets that are maturing in 2020.

We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions on the proposed topics of the eight interactive dialogues.

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**[Ambassador Hermann of Denmark]**

Before the floor is opened for statements, as indicated in our letter dated 30 January, I wish to remind participants of the time limit of FIVE minutes for States speaking on behalf of a group of States, THREE minutes for States speaking in a national capacity, and TWO minutes for all other participants, so that all requests for the floor can be accommodated within the two hours we have allocated for this discussion.

I would therefore request speakers to keep your statement or intervention as brief and succinct as possible. Please note that once

representatives being delivering their statements, the countdown clock on the screen will begin. If representatives go more than 30 seconds over time they will be given a warning and after 1 minute past the time limit we will turn of the microphone. I assure you that this is not because we do not want to listen to you, but because we want to listen to **all** of you.

Representatives with longer statements or interventions are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and to submit their full-length statements to the Secretariat for posting on the Conference website.

Participants are kindly requested to press the button on the console before them in order to request for the floor.

In accordance with the modalities resolution, apart from States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, other participants will be given the opportunity to speak as well at appropriate junctures during the meeting.

I also want to highlight that Ambassador Olai and I held a webinar with stakeholders last week to brief them on our proposed approach to these consultations. In addition to opportunities at this meeting, we invite input from all stakeholders in response to the background note on science and innovation in support of Goal 14. This will include an e-consultation process and a further webinar in March, and further details on these modalities will be circulated separately.

**[See the list of speakers.]**

**[Ambassador Hermann of Denmark]**

I now give the floor to the representative of \_\_\_\_\_.

\* \* \*

**[Ambassador Hermann of Denmark]**

I thank the representative of \_\_\_\_\_.

We have heard the last speaker in the discussion on the themes for the interactive dialogues.

I thank delegations for their attendance and participation at this preparatory meeting.

Before concluding, I should like to remind members that as indicated in the programme, this afternoon's meeting will focus on the elements for a brief, concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally agreed declaration will take place at 3:00 p.m. in this Room.

The meeting is adjourned. 

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