

DISCUSSION ON THE DECLARATION

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. We thank you, co-facilitators, for providing this opportunity for us to reflect on the declaration for the Conference. As mandated, the Group reiterates that the declaration should be brief, concise and action oriented, focusing on the science-based and innovative areas of action to support implementation of SDG 14.
3. Firstly, keeping in mind that during the 2017 UN Ocean Conference we adopted a very comprehensive declaration entitled “Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action” our efforts in 2020 must be to complement and supplement that outcome. In the new declaration, we must avoid duplicating what has already been captured in the prior Call for Action. We must also avoid reopening and renegotiating its content, which was a comprehensively deliberated and a balanced outcome.
4. Secondly, we wish to support the proposed working methods for our deliberations on the declaration. At the 2017 Conference, with the co-facilitators as the penholders, we engaged in inclusive and transparent consultations and we were able to emerge with a balanced and comprehensive outcome.

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5. The Group of 77 and China have full trust, confidence and faith in your able leadership and guidance as we begin our deliberations on the declaration in an open and transparent manner. We look forward to the zero draft of the text, and request that its subsequent iterations be made available as soon as possible, to enable sufficient time for consultations within the Group.
6. In terms of scheduling the upcoming consultations, we would also request that all efforts are made to avoid overlap with the other related processes ongoing

during the time period we have allocated for these consultations. As this is a cross-cutting issue and draws from the expertise of both Second and Sixth Committee delegates, we want to ensure that the relevant delegates can effectively engage in the discussions.

7. Turning now to the substance of the declaration, the Group of 77 and China wish to reiterate the important role of the ocean in poverty eradication, food security, protecting employment, and addressing climate change, and the impact of the global climate. SDG 14 is one of the most interlinked Goals in the Sustainable Development Agenda.
8. In this context, it is vital for the declaration to recognize and highlight the current state of the global marine environment. We are alarmed at the rate of deterioration of the marine environment, due to unsustainable anthropogenic activities. In order to derive effective solutions to these issues, we need to identify and understand where we currently are, according to the latest and best available science.
9. With science and innovation as its overarching theme, the outcome of the Conference must expand the horizons for marine scientific research, enable better access to scientific information and data, and assist countries to utilize the potential the Ocean has to offer in a sustainable way. Due to capacity constraints, amongst the myriad challenges we face, developing countries are not at parity with other countries to achieve this objective. Therefore, the provision of developmental financial resources, transfer of technology, innovation, enhanced international support and targeted capacity building are necessary elements of the outcome from this Conference.
10. The outcome should also complement and contribute to the advancement of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, which will be held from 2021 to 2030. The main objective should be to create improved and enabling conditions for developing countries to benefit from, and contribute to Ocean Science. The sustainable use of the immense potential that the Ocean has to offer humanity cannot be realized without the ability for developing countries to contribute to it.

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11. We believe that it is critical for the outcome document to recognize the nexus between the Ocean and the adverse impacts of climate change and related natural phenomena. The Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, highlights the oceanic challenges that are occurring as a result of climate change. Although this has global implications, developing countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, and African States, including coastal ones, are disproportionately affected. There are also serious challenges within many middle-income countries. We must explore the science-based and innovative solutions that address these interlinked issues, and also enable research which would enhance further understanding and integration of all relevant and complementary knowledge systems about the Ocean, including traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

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12. The conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, seas and marine resources are inherent in SDG 14. As such, there should be a balance between conservation and sustainable use. More and better access to data, sharing of knowledge and best practices, capacity development, and innovative technologies are needed to help us succeed.

13. Finally, we also believe that the declaration should identify and promote ways to advance the interaction between science and policy making in Ocean governance. While an immense amount of scientific knowledge exists, there are still insufficient avenues for this knowledge to feed into the numerous multilateral processes that are ongoing. The best available science and all other relevant and complementary knowledge systems – including traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities – are critical in guiding the path that we take towards 2030 and beyond, for the conservation and sustainable use of the Ocean.

14. These are some broad and preliminary views on the elements for the declaration, which will be supplemented further by interventions from Members of the Group. The G77 and China will continue to engage constructively in these discussions, and we reassure you of our continued support throughout this process.

I thank you.