



Permanent Mission of Iceland
to the United Nations

**Statement by Mr. Jón Erlingur Jónasson, Director-General, Directorate
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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

Iceland is of the view that in our consultations we should honor the agreements we have and the many mechanisms and processes that already exist.

The UNCLOS is the cornerstone of all activities concerning the oceans. The declaration should call for wider implementation of UNCLOS and related instruments. It is important to recognize the capacity of the current regime to address current challenges. We should recognize the ongoing BBNJ-process, but may not in any way prejudge its outcome.

Regarding the first question, on important areas of action, the declaration should recognize that science based and sustainable management systems is the best conservation measure available. We have this demonstrated all over the world where innovative actions have been taken in fisheries management on a national and regional basis, all built on environmental science and monitoring data.

On your second question, we would like to see a call for, and recognition of, how Blue bioeconomy can be a major and growing economic sector in the future if we sustainably manage our ocean resources. We need this positive driver to rationalize and increase further investments and actions in conservation. The benefits of healthy oceans are enormous for the climate, food security and poverty eradication. This must be strongly highlighted in the declaration.

Furthermore, what we harvest must all be used, so practices of circular economy must be highlighted. In Iceland we have some good examples where we aim to utilize 100% of the byproducts of the traditional cod fish processing, into for example mineral supplements and cosmetics. We have experienced in some cases that the byproducts have higher value than the fish fillet itself.

On question three, we believe that more collaboration and partnerships across all sectors, environmental, social and economic, can push the international community to better leverage synergies in their work. The declaration should recognize the importance of increased cooperation and collaboration between global, regional and sectoral bodies.

On question four, what are the challenges? We believe that lack of investments and political will are high on that list. We are not using all our current science and innovations and available resources as we should. Yes, we need more science and innovations, smartest, newest technologies and innovations available, but that should not be an excuse for lack of action today.

The declaration must put this upfront and call for more immediate action and resources to the ocean sector, both in developed and developing countries. We need strong political declaration to change our course, to start a new era or rather a paradigm shift of how we treat the oceans.