

STATEMENT

Delivered By

H.E. Mr. Nkopane R. Monyane

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the United Nations**

on behalf of the Group of LLDCs

at the

**Preparatory Meeting for the 2020 Conference to Support the
Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and
sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable
development**

4 February 2020, New York

Please check against delivery

Mr. President
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to address the participants of this important preparatory meeting for the 2020 UN Conference on Oceans to be held in June in Lisbon, Portugal. I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries.

The Group of LLDCs attaches great importance to the achievement of Goal 14 on Conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. We recognise the huge threats faced by the oceans and its resources as well as the devastating impact of unhealthy oceans in particular the impact of climate change which affects both coastal countries and landlocked states.

Though LLDCs have no coastal land they have a linkage to the oceans including through rivers. The LLDCs rights to utilize the oceans, seas and marine resources are also clearly articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). UNCLOS gives the landlocked states the right to access the oceans as well as the right to participate, on an equitable basis, in the exploitation of the surplus of the living resources. The high seas are open to all States and its resources are the common heritage of mankind.

So far more than half of the 32 LLDCs are State Parties to UNCLOS. However, their participation in the ocean economy remains marginal partly due to poorly developed transit and transport systems, limited resources, lack of awareness, lack of technology and know-how, as well as limited access to the sea. It is imperative to enhance the participation of LLDCs in the ocean-based economies as well as in the implementation of SDG 14.

Addressing challenges faced by the LLDCs in accessing the sea is therefore of paramount importance. This includes through addressing transit challenges faced by the LLDCs by providing transit infrastructure, capacity building and undertaking border crossing reforms. The outcome of the 2017 Ocean Conference - "Our Ocean, our future: call for action" acknowledges the challenges faced by LLDC. The upcoming Ocean Conference is therefore an opportunity for us to build on this. Our Group's firm position is that awareness raising, capacity-building, technology transfer, information, and education should be extended to landlocked developing countries in the next outcome document to be adopted in June to ensure inclusive approach to the implementation of SDG 14 and leaving no one behind.

As you know, out of the 32 LLDCs, 16 of them are LDCs, and their issues are of great significance to the LLDCs Group. Due to various factors, such as LDCs participation in the UN Oceans and the law of the sea, negotiation process has been very limited. Therefore, expanding the Trust Fund in a way to create awareness to LDCs is crucial. We also see it relevant for LLDCs to be part of one of the interactive dialogues under the themes proposed by the Secretary-General in his background note. In particular, we propose to include LLDCs participation in implementation of SDG 14 under the theme "Promoting and strengthening sustainable ocean-based economies, in particular for Small Island developing States and least developed countries.

We strongly believe that the UN agencies and Member States should build a new approach of greater regional cooperation, collaboration and coherence, based on the concept of the "3 Cs", to overcome contemporary challenges. **This partnership should also include transit developing countries.** This obviously has to be multiplied manifold times more with the invaluable support from other development partners with their ODA channels. It is only then that we can enable the LLDCs to inclusively achieve SDG 14 as well as 16 other goals alongside with other countries.

As we continue to engage let us take into consideration that SDGs are indivisible and should be implemented in an inclusive manner and their implementation should take into consideration the interconnectedness of the people and of the planet.

In conclusion I wish to reiterate the LLDCs' commitment to the implementation SDG 14 and the achievement of its targets.

Thank you.
