

2020 UN Conference to support the Implementation of SDG 14: Conserve and substantially use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Preparatory Meeting

4-5 February, 2020

India Statement

by

Mr. Siddharth Malik, First Secretary

4 February 2020

Thank You Madam Co-facilitator,

My delegation would like to thank the efforts made by the two co-facilitators, the distinguished PRs of Palau and Denmark in working towards finalizing an inter-governmentally agreed outcome document for the upcoming Oceans Conference in June this year.

We align with the statement delivered by the PR of Guyana on behalf of G-77.

The 2nd Ocean Conference is being organized at an opportune time and will serve as an important platform for stocktaking the progress made in the implementation of SDG 14 since the last edition of conference held in 2017. Several targets under SDG 14 have a deadline of 2020. Thus in this context the declaration should focus on the following area:

With as much as 40% of the world's oceans heavily affected by human activities, including pollution, depleted fisheries, loss of coastal habitats, marine litter and particularly the dumping of single-use plastic is the fastest growing environmental concern. With a vast coastline of 7,500 km, the country faces an enormous challenge in cleaning up its seas. We have even made a voluntary commitment to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022.

My delegation is of the view that the 1982 UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) should continue to remain as the legal framework for all activities in the Oceans and seas. At the same time we welcome the process of governance of areas beyond such jurisdiction, in view of the rapid advances in technology and our scientific understanding.

Madam Co-facilitator,

Each year the world is witnessing a rise in natural disasters such as tsunami, tropical cyclones and flooding result in considerable damage to life and property. This is in addition to the man-made marine and coastal disasters including oil spills and chemical accidents. The adverse impacts of climate change on Oceans among others include the rise in ocean temperatures, ocean and coastal acidification, sea level rise, and rapid decline in polar ice coverage.

There is an urgent case to develop and implement effective adaptation and mitigation measures that contribute to increasing and supporting resilience and addressing harmful impacts of climate change on the ocean. We also need enhanced ocean and coastal observation data to forecast, mitigate and recover from disasters.

Illegal and un-monitored fishing threatens many fish species and prevents efforts to save and restore global fisheries and related jobs, causing ocean fisheries to generate US\$ 50 billion less per year than they could. There is need for more action to fight illegal and unmonitored fishing.

India recognizes oceans as a driver of inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development. India is the second-largest producer of fish in the world and fisheries is a source of livelihood for as many as 15 million families in India. We are of the view that sustainable ocean-based economies need to be supported, which in turn will provide impetus for sustainable tourism, aquaculture, maritime transportation, and marine biotechnology.

Madam Co-facilitator,

Given the diversity of needs and challenges, we should not only identify additional and new ways of enhanced finances along with ensuring transfer of marine technology, but also identify effective global partnerships that are necessary for capacity building, generate greater marine awareness and share scientific knowledge especially with SIDS and LDCs to help them develop as a sustainable ocean-based economies.

Madam Co-facilitator,

You can count on India's support in the negotiation process and we will constructively engage in the process. We look forward to receiving the 'zero draft' in the coming weeks.

I Thank You.