

Sri Lanka Statement

Ambassador and Permanent Representative Dr. Rohan Perera

Preparatory Meeting for the 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

Elements for the Call For Action

16th February 2017

(5 Minutes)

Distinguished Co-facilitators,

The Delegation of Sri Lanka congratulates you on your appointment as co facilitators and for the orderly and effective manner in which you have conducted this preparatory meeting. We are confident that under your leadership and under the leadership of the Co-hosts of the Oceans Conference, Fiji and Sweden, *and* with the support of the President of the General Assembly, the Secretariat and other relevant actors, that this meeting will prove a firm foundation for the success of the Conference in June this year.

As an island nation that is impacted by the health of the oceans, we express our unwavering constructive support to the objectives of the upcoming Oceans Conference as we, the international community together, and with a common and steadfast purpose, seek to identify ways and means to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

My delegation stands ready to do whatever is necessary within our reach, to build successful partnerships, share experiences gained at the national, regional and international levels and above all take action towards the implementation of Goal 14.

We recognize that we are bound inextricably together in humanity through our oceans and that as member states, we have common but differentiated responsibilities to preserve our oceans for future generations. Oceans provide livelihoods for coastal communities, particularly in developing countries. And yet, marine- and land-based human activities threaten our oceans and marine resources, with some 80 percent of marine pollution and litter, coming from land- based sources. We can stop the escalation of this pollution with the requisite political will.

Co facilitators

Sri Lanka was closely involved from the outset with the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea under the Presidency of Ambassador Shirley Amerasinghe of Sri Lanka, who guided it through the development of the new legal regime of the oceans. The three key institutions established by the Convention on the Law of the Sea, namely the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, have played critical roles and continue to play significant roles in enabling developing countries like Sri Lanka, among others, reap the benefits of ocean

resources, in particular the prospective exploitation of the continental shelf, in a sustainable manner.

Sri Lanka believes that the marine environment, marine research and marine technology should be approached with the principle of inter-generational equity uppermost in our minds.

A Call to Action must therefore be firmly based on the legal framework of UNCLOS and its implementing agreements. It must be a concise and precise document that is realistic, and can harness the political will of each member state, inspire in all stakeholders including civil society organizations and the private sector a determination to act, and enable developing countries who are greatly and adversely impacted by the current state of the oceans, to share in the benefits of development, prosperity and greener and more sustainable oceans.

Neither can we approach SDG 14 in isolation, as the achievements of the targets under SDG 14, will depend on the achievement of and actions taken under other SDGs, including in the areas of food security, economic growth, industrialization and infrastructure. These interactions and interlinkages must be kept in mind in the Call for Action.

Regional and inter regional cooperation, dimensions of financing and capacity-building and science based action, should be included as elements of the Call for Action, and it must necessarily be an inclusive and transparent document that is action oriented and firmly committed to the implementation of SDG14.

Thank you