

Post-2015 development agenda Intergovernmental Negotiations

3rd Session (23-27 March 2015)

JOINT STATEMENT ON OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES

Delivered by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations

26th March 2015

Mr. Co-facilitators,

The following countries, (Australia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Panama, Palau, Poland, Sweden, USA), would like to use this opportunity to reiterate the importance that we collectively attach to Goal 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The Oceans' significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development has not been given the attention it deserved in the Millennium development Goals. That is why our countries, since the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio, have been firm supporters of a stand-alone SDG on Oceans and Seas, advocating its significant importance for the people and the planet. Our countries are, therefore, particularly pleased to see the inclusion of Goal 14 in the SDG framework. This is recognition of the vital importance of healthy oceans to sustaining life and livelihoods on Earth. This is not just a coastal State or small island developing State issue – we all stand to benefit from healthy, productive and resilient oceans and seas.

Oceans and seas have a fundamental role in contributing to global prosperity – beyond the important environmental contribution oceans make, including in terms of regulating climate – oceans provide food security for billions of people and are an important source of employment and income for many communities globally. The sustainable management of oceans and seas is therefore critical for economic and social development, poverty eradication and in raising living standards worldwide.

We have a challenging task on our hands. We need to turn the tide and reverse the pressures from unsustainable human activity both at sea and on land. In this framework, implementation of all the targets under Goal 14 will greatly contribute to meeting the challenge and help us reap the benefits that the oceans and seas can provide. For these reasons, it is our view that oceans indicators should be strongly considered for inclusion in any 'core' list of indicators that may be developed.

The targets contained in goal 14 reflect the comprehensive set of actions required to ensure that the world's oceans and seas are well-positioned to contribute to sustainable development. As we turn our minds to implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, it will be important to ensure that the targets and indicators that we set ourselves are meaningful and achievable, whilst maintaining a high level of aspiration. To achieve maximum effectiveness, the targets and indicators must also be consistent with relevant international agreements and standards.

Finally, with regard to target 14c we would like to highlight the international consensus as expressed in Rio and by the General Assembly of the important role of international law as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and the sustainable use of the oceans, and their resources.