

**Intervention of H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza
Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the
United Nations**

*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.
Discussion on “Themes for Partnership Dialogues”
New York, February 15-16, 2017*

Distinguished Co-facilitators,

My delegation wishes to congratulate you on your appointment as co-facilitators of this preparatory process leading to the High-level Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. My delegation welcomes the opportunity to share its view on the proposed “themes for partnership dialogues.”

In 2015, Pope Francis issued an Encyclical Letter entitled “Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home,” regarding the urgent need to protect our planet and to develop a more integral ecology. He considered various aspects of the present ecological crisis, including marine pollution, ocean acidification, declining fish stocks, biodiversity loss, and degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems.

These same environmental challenges and calls to action form part of the proposed seven “themes for partnership dialogues.” At the core of these themes are the principles of respect for creation, the common good, the dignity of every human being and the justice due to all.

Pope Francis urged dialogue at all levels and among the various fields of expertise to deal effectively with the challenges facing our environment. In particular, His Holiness suggests dialogue about a common approach and common action in the international community, in national and local policies, in decision-making, in politics and the economy, as well as a dialogue between religions and the sciences. It is for this reason that he addresses the Encyclical to “all people” and not only to Catholics. This dialogue should engender a transformative action that goes beyond business as usual, bringing together science and religion, technology and philosophy, culture, economics and politics, individuals and groups.

My delegation therefore would urge the preparatory committee not only to consider partnerships involving science, law or business – which are all very necessary – but also to consider those with institutions of an ethical and religious character, because the fight against ecological problems has moral and spiritual dimensions. As Pope Francis affirms, environmental degradation and human and ethical degradation go hand in hand. It is impossible to address adequately the negative impact of human behavior on the environment without considering the causes and effects of this behavior.

In this respect, my delegation would urge the preparatory committee to consider partnerships with faith-based communities and other civic organizations, because on the ground and in international advocacy they reliably foster better care of and greater respect for our oceans, seas and marine resources.

My delegation supports the active consideration of partnerships at all levels. This will necessarily involve all sectors that seek the reduction of pollution and ocean acidity, sustainable fisheries, the promotion of the livelihood of small-scale fishermen, the recognition of the special circumstances of the poor – especially those living in the least developed countries and small island developing States – and the implementation of international, regional and local laws and policies in furtherance of these goals. No valid partner should be excluded from such dialogue.

Thank you, Co-facilitators.