



PERMANENT MISSION
OF ICELAND TO THE UN

**Statement by
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**UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14
Preparatory Meeting**

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you our priorities when it comes to the elements of the Call for Action to be negotiated during the next few months and adopted by consensus at the Ocean Conference in June.

Our work on this important document must be based on resolution 70/303, which stipulates the modalities for the Conference. Operational paragraph 16 of the resolution lays down that the declaration shall be concise, focused and intergovernmentally agreed. Its fundamental focus is to support the implementation of Goal 14.

My delegation emphasizes that the Call for Action should have a comprehensive approach given the interlinkage of all the targets under Goal 14. In our view the document should not be negotiated target by target, but should aim to create synergies between them.

The mandate of the Conference is to support the implementation of SDG14 by bringing together innovative ideas and partnerships. Importantly the Conference should not renegotiate prior agreements or resolutions. Further it should honor the many existing mechanisms and processes related to the oceans.

In practice this means that the Call for Action should recognize the central role of the High-level Political Forum in the implementation, follow-up and review of Goal 14, as well as that of the various UN departments, agencies and processes that already exist in the field of oceans. The Call for Action should also recognize

the on-going BBNJ-process but may not in any way prejudge its outcome, as mentioned in operative paragraph 21 of the modalities resolution.

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The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is the cornerstone of all activities concerning the oceans. The Call for Action should call for wider implementation of UNCLOS and related instruments. It is important to recognize the capacity of the current regime, with adequate implementation and monitoring, to address current challenges. The regime is in many aspects built upon regional implementation of the principles enshrined in the Convention. This should be reflected in the Call for Action.

Sustainable fisheries management is essential to secure effective use of marine resources. Iceland has been among leading nations in developing science-based management of marine resources where the key elements for success are scientific knowledge, well developed system of distributing fisheries rights in the form of catch limitations and efficient enforcement system. Although fisheries management has often failed in the past it is important to recognize that in the future the situation can be brought under control by applying current knowledge and experience. In our attempts to sustainably manage our oceans MPAs will play a role as a part of a wider range of available tools, but importantly such activities need to be based on the best available science.

In order to realize our full potential in reaching the sustainable development goals we have to recognize the need for capacity building and transfer of technology. Capacity building includes the overall implementation of UNCLOS, sharing of relevant sustainable practices, increased regional cooperation and development of infrastructure that enables effective monitoring of compliance. For this to happen we need increased financing, viable and innovative partnerships and additional focus on and access to research and development.

The universality of the SDGs should be the guiding light in all our work. The Call for Action should therefore recognize and call for awareness-raising of the contribution of healthy oceans to the achievement of other goals. Various cross-cutting factors also have a large role to play for the success of our work. My delegation would like to underline gender equality and women's empowerment as a vital prerequisite for the achievement of all the sustainable development goals. As regards oceans, this would include access of women to small-scale fisheries and consequently important contribution to food security and poverty eradication.

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Healthy oceans and robust marine ecosystems remain a constant concern for Iceland, a nation of seafarers and fishermen through generations. International cooperation towards that aim is a longstanding priority for us. We look forward to engaging constructively with all of you in the coming months on this important issue.