



# New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

## Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG14: Preparatory Meeting

### **New Zealand statement**

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Co-facilitators,

New Zealand aligns itself with the Pacific Islands Forum statements delivered by the Federated States of Micronesia.

Thank you for facilitating this meeting today and providing us with the opportunity to share our views on what the Call for Action should contain.

I would like to start by expressing New Zealand's full support for both the June conference and this preparatory process. The First World Ocean Assessment found that the oceans' carrying capacity is near or at its limit. This conference therefore comes at an opportune time to galvanise the urgent action required to implement Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14).

It is important that a wide range of Member States, civil society and other stakeholders actively participate in this conference and in the implementation of SDG 14. For this reason, New Zealand has contributed to the voluntary trust fund to support the participation of small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCS).

We share the desire expressed by many so far that the Call for Action should be a concise, action-orientated document that does not revisit or renegotiate the targets or existing instruments but instead complements and advances them. We also stress the universality of the sustainable development goals and their interrelated nature.

In this regard, we would like to see language recognising the other oceans processes, including the findings of the first World Ocean Assessment and the second cycle of the Regular Process. The World Ocean Assessment will assist in ensuring that action taken to implement SDG 14 is based on the best available science.

We strongly agree with the points made by many so far that the document should include a call for effective implementation of UNCLOS and related instruments, as well as wider ratification of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the Port State Measures Agreement.

Coordinated effort at the global, regional and national levels will be required to protect the world's oceans from the many pressures they face. Capacity building will also be essential to effectively mobilise action worldwide.

Finally, the Call for Action should reaffirm the importance of taking action to conserve and sustainably use fisheries. According to recent FAO data, the share of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels continues to exhibit a downward trend, declining from 90 percent in 1974 to 68.6 percent in 2013.

Key factors in this decline include the negative economic incentives that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity, such as subsidies and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, among others. We need to have policy coherence and a multilateral outcome if target 14.6 is to be achieved. The 11th WTO Ministerial Conference later this year represents a significant opportunity to establish effective disciplines on harmful fisheries subsidies.

We look forward to working with the co-facilitators, co-hosts and other colleagues over the next few months to ensure the success of this conference.

Thank you.