



Statement

by

**H.E. Ms. Maria Helena Pires
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the
Democratic Republic of
Timor-Leste to the United Nations**

at the

**Preparatory Meeting of 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**

**15 February 2017
New York**

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Distinguished Co-Presidents, Co-Facilitators, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to deliver a statement on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to this preparatory meeting.

At the outset, Timor-Leste commends the Co-Presidents and Co-facilitators in convening the preparatory meeting. We wish to also acknowledge the important role of the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Peter Thomson and commend him for his vision and steadfast commitment to the SDGs and Oceans. We are certain that with the participation and active engagement of all, this two-day meeting and indeed the Conference will be conducted successfully.

Timor-Leste also aligns itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and Least Develop Countries (LDCs).

We greatly appreciate and applaud the efforts made by the Secretary General in preparing a very constructive background note. Timor-Leste agrees with the seven themes proposed by the Secretary General, as they are grounded on SDG 14 and indeed reflect our concerns.

We believe that the oceans provide essential resources for humanity as a whole and as such all people should benefit from these resources. Addressing marine pollution, managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems, minimizing and addressing ocean acidification and ensuring sustainable fisheries are crucial for the well being of all people.

Considering the many challenges facing oceans, Timor-Leste believes that we must move forward by building on international agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and through existing international legal framework, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as an important international regulatory instrument.

Whilst important progress has been made at the global level, it is equally important to acknowledge that sustained advancement requires a continued commitment to ensure that our international agreements are implemented and have positive effects at the local level. Timor-Leste believes that our collective efforts in this regard will lead to the achievement of SDG 14.

We have a saying in Timor-Leste *“if not now, when. If not us, who else ?”*.

Thank you.