

Statement from International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

Dear distinguished chairs, dear excellencies and delegates, dear friends. Thank you to Sweden and Fiji for organizing this already very stimulating and productive conference and Canada and Senegal for having organized this partnership dialogue.

It is an honour and great pleasure to read this statement of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. We are the oldest intergovernmental organization, founded in 1902, dealing with marine issues. We have 20 member countries, all neighbouring the North Atlantic Ocean and are giving advice to the European Commission, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations like NASCO and NEAFC, Regional Conventions like OSPAR and HELCOM and our member countries on Total Allowable Catch of fish stocks, impact of fisheries activities as well as on ecosystem components like seabirds and marine mammals. So you can see that we have a long tradition to deal with fish.

However, we believe that a systemic and holistic view and approach is needed to achieve the Ecosystem Based Approach to Fisheries and subsequently Maritime Management. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea has recently set its vision to move towards Integrated Ecosystem Assessments to extend the scientific basis towards this holistic approach. This means we are going beyond single issue, single sector assessments but are taking all maritime activities into account, including ecological, social, economic and governance aspects at the same time. We are specifically aiming to advise on the sustainable use of marine living resources and use Integrated Ecosystem Assessments to explicitly show trade-offs between conservation and the development of harvesting activities or potentially other maritime activities for that matter.

Relying currently on the work of over 2000 international scientists, even beyond its member countries, we have build up a partnership, a diverse global network of marine scientists. However, we are of course open to welcome any expert willing to engage in the network. And we are not only aiming to broker the best available science to quality assured advice, but also build up capacity in data storage, data handling and analysis as well as offering capacity building efforts through our Training Programme.

We invite you to have a look at our webpage to explore the work of over 135 expert groups, dozens of topical workshops, the data centre, the science network, the advisory processes and the secretariat supporting the voluntary work of all scientists. Get involved and join the network!

With this I close this intervention and wish to express the will of ICES to further support the efforts to achieve SDG 14 in all related activities like the World Ocean Assessment and wish everyone a further productive and stimulating conference here in New York. Thank you very much!