



**United Nations Ocean Conference  
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**Statement by Massimo Tommasoli  
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**Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Over the last few days we have been witnessing the realization of the first global international mobilization on our oceans, seas and marine resources as a key element for sustainable development. As an international organisation with the mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide, International IDEA stresses the importance of democratic accountability for SDG 14 and the achievement of its targets. A logic of mere exploitation of the ocean as a commodity, and extraction of its resources, would never achieve marine pollution reduction, coastal and marine conservation, ecosystem protection and restoration, sustainable use of marine resources and fishing, and the end of subsidies contributing to overfishing.

Firstly, since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is people-centered, the engagement of people and local communities in its implementation should be based on the concept of active citizenship. People should not be considered simply as producers and consumers of commodities and marine resources, but also as citizens. If framed in this perspective, democratic accountability mechanisms should be placed at the core of the relationship between states and citizens for promoting national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans. The principle of democratic control by citizens on such resources should

drive the translation of commitments into action. This is in line with the emphasis placed by the Call for Action on the importance of national ownership and the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including national and local authorities, members of parliament, local communities and other actors.

Secondly, as indicated in the Call for Action, coherence and integration across the SDG framework should highlight the synergies, cross-cutting dimensions, and interlinkages among different SDGs that can help Member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda as a whole. Among the many goals relevant for SDG 14, I would like to underscore the importance of SDG 12 on responsible production and consumption, SDG 5 on gender equality, and SDG 16 on peace, justice and accountable institutions.

Thirdly, it is encouraging to note that action has already started. Over 1000 voluntary commitments have been registered so far in the website of the Ocean Conference. However, language matters. While the importance of parliaments has been underscored in the Call for Action, a key-word search on the voluntary commitments shows that only 2 of them explicitly refer to “parliaments” or “parliamentarians.” Only 15 mention “transparency”; only 6 refer to “accountability;” and only 7 highlight “human rights”. Furthermore, these figures would be even smaller if we would limit the analysis exclusively to the voluntary commitments made by Member States.

In conclusion, at the time of the adoption of this historic Call for Action, it is important for all the actors involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and in particular those responsible for the achievement of SDG 14, to make sure that national plans and international commitments live up to the level of ambition expressed by the Conference. Let’s make our institutions accountable for more resilient oceans. I thank you, Mr President.