



# **The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations**

**Opening remarks by**

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**Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture**

**Co-Chair of Partnership Dialogue 6: Increasing Scientific Knowledge and  
Developing Research Capacity and Transfer of Marine Technology**

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**High-level 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**

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The background note of the Secretary General for this conference makes a compelling case for increasing scientific knowledge and research capacity as well as the transfer of technology. While all the seven partnership dialogues are addressing fundamental aspects of fulfilling the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the present session is no doubt of special interest, because unless we acquire the necessary scientific information and share it, we will not be successful in meeting our targets.

We have come a long way in our understanding of the challenges related to sustainable conservation and management of the oceans for current and future generations. However, understanding the vast oceans can be compared with sailing towards the horizon - never seems to get closer until we see land. We have charts to guide us on this journey. It is important to base our practice firmly on frameworks as established by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Sustainable management must start at the local level – extend to a regional level and in the end we must all be accountable.

All policies for the conservation and sustainable management of the oceans should be based on sound scientific research. This means ensuring we have well-funded, competent and independent research institutions. Where financial resources are limited we should note that assessment methods have been developed in recent years to cope with data limited situations.

Cooperation in scientific activities and capacity building in marine sciences, is taking place in bilateral projects and also takes place regionally and under the umbrella of global organisations, such as FAO. Sharing of knowledge is essential at all levels for all countries, because marine sciences are most often large-scale activity, where cooperation gives much added value.

Sustainable harvesting, processing and transport are also vital and we need to ensure better use of existing technologies. This entails sharing of technology and know-how.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As a country heavily dependent on the sustainable use of living marine resources, Iceland has much to contribute, but we also appreciate the opportunity to learn about other experiences. Iceland has for almost two decades contributed to capacity-building in fisheries management in developing countries. We have mainly done so through the UN University Fisheries Training Programme in Iceland.

Finally, politicians also have a major responsibility. The challenge and responsibility for them is to have the strength to follow scientific advice, even when it is unwelcome. Science should provide the basis for responsible policy making. We politicians must look to the long-term interests of society and the environment – and stand against short term, narrow interests.