



Monterey Bay Aquarium

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Statement of The Monterey Bay Aquarium to the United Nations Ocean Conference June 9, 2017

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity for Monterey Bay Aquarium to offer remarks as the U.N. Ocean Conference moves toward conclusion today.

At the Monterey Bay Aquarium, protecting the ocean is paramount to everything we do. Over the last 30 years, we have continuously expanded our capacity to take action on behalf of the ocean and to inspire other to do the same. We are committed to delivering on our mission by educating more people about the importance of marine life and habitats, growing the body of scientific research to advance ocean conservation, and inviting diverse partners to work with us as we develop science-based policy and market actions to safeguard threatened ocean resources around the globe.

This week, the U.N. welcomed the world to the first-ever U.N. Ocean Conference to seek common understanding of our major ocean challenges and new opportunities to advance Sustainable Development Goal 14. Through the many dialogues and side sessions, we heard from delegates, inter-governmental organizations and stakeholders, and the message is clear: The health of the ocean is linked to our own human existence on this planet, and directly impacts our ability to achieve many of the Sustainable Development Goals established by the U.N. This week's recognition of the significance of a healthy ocean should sharpen our collective focus and resolve to follow through on existing and new commitments to make meaningful progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 14.

We are encouraged by this week's commitments and discussions, particularly on the issues of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, plastic pollution and ocean acidification. The U.N. Ocean Conference showcased the power of partnerships to bring key stakeholders together to drive collective action.

In light of this week's discussions, the Monterey Bay Aquarium wishes to reiterate our commitment to work with governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to advance Goal 14.4 to implement science-based management and address overfishing, IUU fishing and destructive fishing practices. Partnership Dialogue 4 illustrated that we have some examples of progress, including movement toward precautionary science-based management and harvest strategies at some of the RFMOs, as well as the Tuna 2020 Traceability Declaration led by the World Economic Forum. However, some persistent challenges remain, and multi-stakeholder engagement can accelerate progress on sustainability. Small-scale fisheries and aquaculture are critical to our collective success, and there is great opportunity for governments to engage existing and emerging collaborations with the private sector and NGOs.

This conference also highlighted the challenge of plastic pollution in our ocean and its vast impacts on our marine resources, ecosystems and even human health. We are encouraged that



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the U.N. seeks to take meaningful action to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, including plastic marine debris. The Monterey Bay Aquarium is working with a new network of leading aquariums across the United States to contribute to this goal by 2025 and beyond. This includes a collective commitment to reduce and eliminate single-use plastic in our retail and food service operations, increase consumer demand for alternatives to single-use plastic, work with our business partners to promote change in the broader marketplace, and champion government policies that address plastic pollution. We invite governments to explore these types of commitments at a global scale.

Ocean acidification is another significant challenge that is directly tied to human activity and carbon emissions. Increased awareness, enhanced scientific cooperation and a commitment to taking individual action to address threats at a regional level: These activities are more urgent now than ever.

We encourage more countries to join the 40 current members representing governments at all levels who have pledged to address this challenge by creating individual Ocean Acidification Action Plans. The Monterey Bay Aquarium will continue to support this global effort by raising awareness about ocean acidification among our millions of visitors and social media followers, and partnering with government and industry to accomplish broader change.

In closing, we thank all delegations for their attention to these ocean issues and welcome further engagement to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in the years ahead.

Thank you.