

Statement
on
Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources, Oceans and Seas
And
Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Republic of Croatia
11th session of OWG SDGs

Mr. Co-chair,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me state, first, that I am delivering this statement in my national capacity.

Croatia recognizes the fundamental importance of conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, including through their contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security and creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change. Therefore, we welcome the elaboration of targets under Focus Area 13 and we see the need for prominent position of **oceans and seas** in the Post-2015 development framework, among SDGs, as **a stand-alone goal with a view of achieving the healthy, productive and resilient oceans and seas within the Post-2015 development agenda.**

The sustainable management of the oceans and seas, as well as their resources, is necessary to ensure the provision of economic and social benefits and ecosystem services to humankind. Key action is needed for prevention, control and reduction of marine pollution and negative impacts from land-based sources and sea-based activities as well as for restoration and protection of marine ecosystems to ensure healthy oceans through ecosystem-based management and the application of the precautionary principle, while sustainable fisheries are necessary for food security.

In that sense we support target a) to which we would like to add specific reference on ‘marine litter or marine debris’¹ and in target b) we would like to highlight the importance of restoration and protection of marine ecosystems for humankind by adding: *‘enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations’*.

Our task is to develop the goals integrating all three dimensions of sustainable development, therefore in the future Goal we would need to establish the link between marine resources, oceans, seas and the adjacent coastal areas, since this forms an integrated whole that is an essential component of the global life-support system and a positive asset that presents opportunities for sustainable development as recognized in Agenda 21. The coastal area contains diverse and productive habitats important for human settlements, development and local subsistence. More than half of the world's population lives within 60 km of the coastline and coastal resources are vital for many local communities. In that sense we propose introducing an additional target after target b), that would read: *implement integrated and participatory coastal zone management, including appropriate transboundary cooperation.*

¹ With this addition the target a) would read as follows: 'by 2030 prevent, control and reduce by x% marine pollution and marine disposal of waste and tailings, marine litter/debris, including from land-based activities

Croatia supports all the other proposed targets under this Focus Area strongly calls for a stand-alone goal for Oceans and Seas, aware that oceans and seas cover more than two-thirds of the Earth's surface and contain 97% of the Planet's water and that their preservation is critical for the prosperity of present and future generations.

On Focus Area 14 concerning Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Croatia considers this Area, as an essential element of earth's life support system, achieving functional ecosystems and the provision of ecosystem services, which is linked also to goals in the area of water, food security and oceans, and deserves a separate attention in the form of a goal. In that sense, Croatia welcomes the proposed targets as well as the inclusion of the reference on sustainable management of forests and mountain ecosystems, halting deforestation and increasing reforestation. We consider of particular importance the reference to land-degradation-neutral world which we consider critical in the context of sustainable development.

Finally, we would like to highlight the **importance of science-policy interface for the overall success of the Post-2015 framework** and would indeed like to draw the attention to the **particular importance of strengthening science-policy interface** for both of these possible future SDGs.

Thank you for your attention.