



MISIÓN PERMANENTE DE EL SALVADOR
ANTE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE DECLARATION FOR 2022
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”**

REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

General Assembly Hall

New York, February 1st, 2022

[Check against delivery]

Distinguished Co-facilitators, Excellencies, delegates:

The Republic of El Salvador aligns itself to the statement delivered by the Group of 77 and China, and in its national capacity, my delegation would like to express the following:

At the outset, the Republic of El Salvador wishes to thank the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Grenada, Her Excellency Keisha McGuire, and Denmark, His Excellency, Martin Hermann for their efforts and to whom we express our support for their work in the upcoming intergovernmental consultation process on the draft Political Declaration regarding the 2022 UN Conference to support the implementation of SDG 14.

My delegation views with great relevance the fundamental role played by the oceans as part of the life cycle of the beings that inhabit this planet, including the role they play in the preservation of biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources, as well as the socio-economic benefits they provide to support human livelihoods.

For this reason, El Salvador considers it is essential to continue the *call for action* and work towards the protection of its sustainability, guaranteeing food security for millions of people and promoting efforts aimed at the conservation and sustainable management of all coastal and marine resources.

Hence, it is very important to maintain the commitment to promote scientific and innovative solutions to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, considering that the oceans are a rich source of marine biodiversity.

The scientific and innovative solutions mentioned in the Draft Declaration are of great value and my delegation considers that they reflect substantive progress achieved not only within the negotiations of this

current Draft, but also in the intergovernmental consultations carried out in other parallel processes, such as: the Omnibus Resolution on Oceans and Law of the Sea, the consultations in relation to the international legally binding instrument within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (hereinafter "BBNJ agreement"), and other regional initiatives, such as the Global Ocean Alliance: 30 by 30 initiative which derives from COP26.

However, there are certain aspects of these science-based solutions that could be updated, strengthened, or incorporated, and in this regard, my delegation, in its national capacity, wishes to refer to questions 1, 4 and 5 raised by the co-facilitators in their letter dated January 10, 2022, as well as additional comments concerning paragraphs 4, 5 and 7 of the Draft Declaration:

1) The declaration mentions several concrete, science-based and innovative solutions to support the implementation of Goal 14. Are these still relevant, and are there any further that should be included?

- ✓ The need to promote the expansion of ***Biological Observing Networks and Marine Biodiversity*** observations, in order to ensure opportunities for the exchange of information and good practices between all countries,
- ✓ **Strengthening marine scientific and technological capacity building initiatives, at global, regional, and national levels**, in order to expand the framework of marine and coastal information for a better scientific understanding and promotion of sustainable ocean activities.
- ✓ **Promoting technology and data transfer, including through oceanographic research vessels and geospatial information, for the expansion of watersheds, biological and marine biodiversity observation networks, especially to developing countries**, in order to ensure opportunities for the exchange of good practices.
- ✓ **Engaging in increasing the area of blue carbon ecosystems, notably mangroves, seagrass beds and tidal marshes** for protecting and rehabilitating coastal and marine habitats, thus enhancing their capacity for carbon storage and sequestration to combat emissions of greenhouse gases.

4) How should the political declaration address relevant recent and upcoming UN Conferences and negotiations, such as UNFCCC COP26, CBD COP15, BBNJ, etc.?

- ✓ **In relation to the upcoming IV Intergovernmental Conference of the BBNJ Agreement**, the Draft Declaration should reinforce the language provided in current paragraph 8 which reads: “ *We also recognize the importance of the work undertaken by the intergovernmental conference to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.*”

In this regard, El Salvador suggests incorporating language that reflects the progress made, thanks to the use of information and communication technologies, in the discussions held during the intersessional period of the IV Intergovernmental Conference, specifically, the work carried out by the President of the Conference, Ambassador Rena Lee; and the invaluable work that intergovernmental organizations, such as the High Seas

Alliance, have been able to implement in order to keep the momentum of the discussions, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ✓ **Convention of Biological Diversity: Kunming declaration “Ecological civilization: building a shared future for all life on earth” (P. 17):** Include language regarding the promotion and protection, conservation, sustainable management and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity.

5) Which, if any, effects of the COVID-19 pandemic should be reflected in the political declaration?

- Taking into account the continuing situation concerning the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the limitations recommended on meetings within the 2022 United Nations Conference premises as precautionary measures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19,
- The increase of plastic pollution in oceans due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional wording suggestions in relation to paragraphs 4 and 7 of the Draft Declaration

- a) **Paragraph 4:** El Salvador considers this paragraph should include the reference to Sea Level Rise and coastal erosion as serious threats for many coastal regions and islands, particularly in developing countries (based on A/RES/76/72, OP208).

In this sense, El Salvador suggests adding the following wording in paragraph 4:

We are therefore deeply alarmed by the global emergency facing the ocean. Sea levels are rising [El Salvador: and coastal erosion is becoming a serious threat for many coastal regions and islands, particularly in developing countries], the ocean is warmer and more acidic. Plastic pollution continues to enter the ocean at an alarming rate, [El Salvador: only aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic], a third of fish stocks are overexploited, and half of all living coral has been lost. While progress has been made towards the achievement of some targets of Goal 14, action is not advancing at the speed or scale required to meet our goals. The most urgent example of this is the lack of progress towards achieving the four targets under Goal 14 that matured in 2020, and we commit to taking further action to achieve all targets as soon as possible.

- b) **Paragraph 7:** El Salvador endorses that the implementation of Goal 14 should be in accordance with, reinforce and not duplicate or undermine, existing legal instruments, arrangements, processes, mechanisms, or entities that enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources.

On that basis, El Salvador would like to specifically refer to the language reflected in paragraph 7, concerning the reference of UNCLOS as the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. In this regard, El Salvador **considers that the proposed language does not represent the different legal positions of Member States**, particularly, those who are not part of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Hence, my delegation proposed during the previous informal consultations in 2020 to add the reference to other relevant international instruments in order to provide a holistic approach towards the sustainability of oceans, since there are other principles and instruments of international law, including principles of **international environmental law**, that make it possible to refer in a multidimensional manner to the different aspects that converge in

the sustainable conservation of the oceans and their management, as well as the scientific approach to the phenomena that occur on marine biodiversity.

Now, my delegation understands that this proposal was not widely accepted within the consultations carried out within the Group of 77 and China; and it is for this reason that, in order to achieve an inclusive balance and consensus in the text of the Declaration that allows all Member States of the Organization to be taken into account, my delegation proposes to add the following safeguard clause; as established in paragraph 10 of resolution 72/249 adopted by the General Assembly and which states:

[El Salvador ADD: 7 bis. Recognizes that neither participation in the negotiations nor their outcome may affect the legal status of non-parties to the Convention or any other related agreements with regard to those instruments, or the legal status of parties to the Convention or any other related agreements with regard to those instruments.]

I thank you.

