



Statement by Permanent Representative Jörundur Valtýsson
1 February 2022

Intergovernmental consultations on the declaration for the 2022
United Nations Conference to support the implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14

Co-facilitators, colleagues,

- It gives me great pleasure to be here today - to get the ball rolling again – and Iceland will do its utmost to contribute to success in Lisbon this summer.
- We have full confidence in the leadership of Grenada and Denmark as penholders. Significant progress has already been made and, as we see it, the current draft is balanced and only needs a few updates to reflect developments of the past two years.
- Since we last discussed the draft, the UN has held a Food Systems Summit, where the Secretary General made strong reference to SDG 14. Iceland would strongly advocate for including in this declaration the importance of aquatic food, sometimes called blue food, in food systems transformation.
 - Blue food is an important source of nutrition to over 3 billion people with much less environmental consequences than many land-based food types. Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture are a necessary part of food systems transformation and have potential to expand their reach in a nature-friendly way.

- There are, furthermore, many inspiring examples of how innovation can be used to transform the utilization of aquatic foods, in line with circular economy principles and the blue bioeconomy.

Co-facilitators,

- In your letter you ask relevant questions, including how to address SDG14 targets, for which the 2020 deadline has passed. Iceland would like to see the declaration reflect a strong determination to reach these targets despite delays. I would specifically highlight target 14.6 of prohibiting harmful fisheries subsidies and we urge all WTO members to finalize the new agreement this year.
- In terms of actions, Iceland would suggest making better reference to the use of existing tools and measures, including under the Port State Measures Agreement against IUU fishing.
- Further on fisheries, while restoring overexploited fish stocks is vital, one should remember that two thirds of stocks are in good shape. Therefore, it is appropriate to talk about both “maintaining and restoring fish stocks”.
- Also importantly, we prefer referring to „ecosystem approach to fisheries“ instead of „ecosystem-based fisheries management“. The former is generally used within the FAO and is a known size.
- We were happy to see that marine plastic gets proper attention in this revised draft. Iceland would encourage strengthening the text to reflect the need for a new international instrument to address this challenge.
- Iceland would also support a reference to ongoing work on implications on sea level rise.

- It is the position of my country that we need all hands on deck in ocean affairs. This purpose can be served by reflecting in the declaration the importance of full, equal and meaningful participation of women.
- Finally, I thank you for taking into account the importance of youth involvement in decision making. They are the generation that will face the consequences of decisions being made now.
- Thank you again and we look forward to working with you.