



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

318 EAST 48<sup>TH</sup> STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10017  
TEL: (212) 826 0840 FAX: (212) 826 2964

**STATEMENT BY MR NATHANIEL KHNG,  
COUNSELLOR (LEGAL), PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE INFORMAL MEETING ON THE  
DECLARATION FOR THE 2022 UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14,  
NEW YORK, 1 FEBRUARY 2022**

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1 The convening of the second Conference comes at a crucial juncture. It will serve to galvanise the urgent, collective efforts based on science and innovation that are needed to address the crisis facing our oceans and to achieve SDG 14. As we resume our preparations for the Conference, we must build on the achievements of the first Conference held in 2017, including the strong partnerships, voluntary commitments and the Call for Action. We must also build on the progress that we have made towards the achievement of SDG 14 over the past two years.

2 Many key elements in the present draft of the political declaration remain relevant. In particular, Singapore believes that it is critical to reaffirm UNCLOS as the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out. This year, we commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of UNCLOS and its opening for signature. The crucial role that the effective implementation of UNCLOS plays in the sustainable use of the oceans and seas is incontrovertible. It is also important to reaffirm the first Conference's Call for Action, which continues to remain relevant and which this declaration should complement and supplement. It is also crucial that this draft underlines the interlinkages and synergies between SDG 14 and the other SDGs; reflects the importance of a strong science-policy interface; encourages data collection and sharing; calls for the reduction in marine pollution through science-based and innovative actions; and gives appropriate recognition to important processes such as the BBNJ intergovernmental conference.

3           However, we believe that this draft can be strengthened in three areas. First, it should make clear that ocean science is an area in which the global community must work together. This would allow us to better understand how changes in our oceans affect marine biodiversity, habitats, ecosystems and climate change. Second, the declaration should recognise that the challenge of marine plastic pollution and marine litter is complex, global and transboundary in nature. Collective action from the global community is crucial to strengthen the global response to marine litter. Third, it is important to reflect that actions to achieve SDG 14 should be in accordance with, reinforce and not duplicate or undermine existing legal instruments, arrangements, processes, mechanisms or entities.

4           We would also highlight three possible updates based on the questions posed by the co-facilitators:

(a)       First, the declaration should include a reference to the importance of the oceans in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. A sustainable ocean economy is especially vital for Small Island Developing States, given that it is a source of employment, food security, healthy people and ecosystems, and resilience.

(b)       Second, the declaration should acknowledge the outcomes of recent UN conferences, in particular, the Glasgow Climate Pact adopted at UNFCCC COP26, which noted the importance of ensuring integrity of all ecosystems, including the ocean, and recognised marine ecosystems as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases. The oceans and marine ecosystems are key to a low-carbon world.

(c)       Third, there should be a placeholder for potential key outcomes of upcoming UN conferences. Of note, the second part of COP15 to the CBD will adopt a new strategic plan known as the post-2020 global biodiversity framework while the resumed session of the Fifth Session of the UN Environment Assembly is expected to adopt a resolution on marine plastic pollution and will consider the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee towards a new global agreement. These will have important implications for the realisation of SDG 14, and we look forward to ambitious, yet realistic, outcomes.

5           My delegation assures you of our full support and that we will engage constructively in the consultations in the coming days.

6           Thank you.

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