



STATEMENT

by

TURKEY

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE DECLARATION FOR THE 2022 UN CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14: “CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

General Assembly Hall
(1 February 2022, New York)

We are pleased to resume the consultations on the declaration for the 2022 UN Conference to support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14). Turkey would like to thank to co-facilitators for organizing this first informal meeting.

Needless to say, protection of marine environment is a high priority for Turkey.

The draft declaration that was shared with us on 28 April 2020 is still valid, but it needs to reflect the changes in the world since then as well as to take into account the concerns of Member States.

1) To begin with, Covid-19 pandemic has to be embedded in the document as reflected in the recent letter of Co-chairs in Question 5. Covid-19 has led to an increased demand for single-use plastics such as masks, gloves that has intensified the pressure on marine environment, triggering marine litter problem. To address this challenge, there is need for further promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns together with marine litter management and solid waste prevention at the source, through development of new strategies. In the Declaration, it would be useful to add a paragraph along these lines.

2) Secondly, with regards to the 4th Question; we would like to bring to your attention the outcomes of the COP22 of the *Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean*, held in Antalya, Turkey between 7 - 10 December 2021.

i) At COP22, a groundbreaking decision was adopted on the “Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI”. “. The measure is expected to generate significant benefits for human health and for the

integrity of ecosystems, which both suffer from harmful SO_x emissions from the maritime transport sector, one of the pillars of the blue economy in the Mediterranean.

ii) On biodiversity, COP 22 adopted the “Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO)”, which is aligned with the building blocks of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be finalized at the second part of COP15 of the UN Convention on Biodiversity at this year.

iii) Regarding marine litter as a global problem, Parties to the Barcelona Convention at COP 22 committed to enhance action in synergy with other relevant regional and global initiatives, in particular for the establishment of an International Negotiating Committee at UN Environmental Assembly 5.2, to be held at the end of February this year, with a mandate to develop a legally binding global agreement to address plastic pollution, to prevent and reduce marine litter, including micro-plastics, and their harmful effects through the effective implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, as adopted by COP22.

Considering these new decisions for the protection of marine environment, Turkey would like to see a paragraph¹ in the text that will welcome the outcomes of COP22 of the Barcelona Convention in Antalya.

3) With regard to paragraph 7 of the draft declaration concerning the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Turkey had conveyed its written input in March 2020. As the revised text which was recently recirculated does not include the changes that we consider crucial, we would like to reiterate our position that this paragraph needs to be formulated in line with the language that was previously agreed in the context of SDG 14 and its implementation.

In this regard, we would like to highlight that both SDG 14 (Target 14.c) and the Declaration entitled “Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action” adopted in 2017 refer to UNCLOS as providing “the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources”. The declaration for the upcoming Conference, which falls in the same context, should reflect the same focused wording², and should avoid non-consensual language.

¹ *We welcome Antalya Ministerial Declaration of COP 22 of the Barcelona Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean to overcome triple pollution-biodiversity-climate crisis and to achieve sustainable development, and the Decisions of COP22 that adopted Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region (Post-2020 SAPBIO) and designated the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (MED SO_x ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI.*

² *We affirm the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”.*

The position of Turkey along with a number of other Member States regarding the current language used in the concerned paragraph is well known. So is the fact that this matter has been the subject of disagreement especially in the context of the UN General Assembly Resolution on “Oceans and the Law of the Sea”, resulting in a vote being called for every year on that Resolution since many years.

Therefore, in line with the spirit of inclusivity, which the Co-facilitators have also highlighted, and the purpose of reaching a consensus-based and focused text, we kindly request that the language used in the Declaration of 2017 be preserved with regard to the reference to UNCLOS.

4) We would like to see a reference in the text regarding the importance and role of UN Technology Bank in assisting LDCs for ocean-based technologies along the lines of the paragraph³ proposal of G77 and China (11 (c)) as presented to co-facilitators on 23 March 2020.

5) On a different note, draft text lacks of any reference to adverse impacts of invasive species on marine environment. In fact, due to the importance of the matter, Ballast Water Management Convention has been developed under IMO. In para 10 (b), it would be relevant to emphasize the importance of combating marine invasive species to overcome the challenges in achieving SDG14.

6) Last but not least, considering the impact of air pollution related CO2 emissions on oceans, it would be useful to mention the importance of reducing air pollution for the elimination of ocean acidification and ocean warming either in para 10 (c) or in a separate para.

The Declaration should give right messages to the HLPF, where it will address SDG 14.

We look forward to a brief and concise Declaration to be adopted by “consensus”, as provided for in General Assembly Resolution 73/292.

We have full trust in our co-facilitators for the continuation of the process in an open, inclusive and transparent manner in finalizing a balanced text.

Turkey is ready to engage negotiations actively and constructively.

Thank you.

³ “Invites member states, international organisations, foundations and the private sector to provide voluntary financial contributions and technical assistance to the Technology Bank for LDCs to increase their capacity to develop sustainable ocean-based technologies”.