

Remarks at the Intergovernmental Consultations on the Declaration for the 2022 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14

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The United States welcomes the opportunity to discuss the conference's declaration and looks forward to identifying opportunities and coordinated actions we can take collectively to enhance our work on ocean issues.

The United States believes that the conference should be inclusive, transparent, and grounded in the frameworks of the 2030 Agenda and the conference modalities resolution. This holds true for the partnership dialogues, as well as the declaration.

The modalities resolution calls for a brief, concise, action-oriented, consensus declaration to support SDG 14. We embrace this approach and stress that the declaration should be succinct, accessible to a wide audience, and focused on concrete actions that Member States can take.

To this end, we encourage facilitators and delegations to focus our efforts on preparing a declaration that only addresses issues directly related to SDG 14, and to identifying previously agreed language to address well-known sensitive and controversial issues.

While we hope to produce an impactful declaration, we do not believe that time spent negotiating it should come at the expense of other, more productive aspects of the conference.

Regarding the structure of the declaration, we encourage the facilitators to strive for an outcome document that would be comprehensible and meaningful to Member States and average citizens, and that would avoid duplicating work undertaken in other fora.

With respect to the content of the declaration, the United States views the conference as an opportunity to focus on tangible areas for cooperation, without developing a new or amended UN agenda for oceans.

For example, we would find merit in a declaration that prioritizes coordinated efforts to ensure regular and efficient reporting by Member States on SDG 14, cooperation on open data, and the sharing of best practices for implementation, in particular through national reporting platforms.

We also see value in incorporating continued global momentum to continue to raise the profile of sustainably managing our ocean, including combatting the climate crisis and supporting sustainable food systems, on the international agenda, both within the UN system, as well as outside the UN system through efforts such as the Our Ocean Conference series and the upcoming UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

We note the important role of the UN technical agencies in supporting Member States' work related to SDG 14, and we would be open to seeing this incorporated in some manner in the declaration.

However, we would not support the declaration establishing new bodies or positions in the UN system, nor do we support any calls for additional, follow-on conferences for SDG 14, considering the overlap and synergies among the various SDGs.

In summary, we look forward to continuing to share ideas on how the declaration could be shaped into a focused and tangible action-oriented outcome document.