

**2022 UNITED NATIONS OCEAN CONFERENCE
ONLINE STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING: INPUTS TO THE POLITICAL
DECLARATION ZERO DRAFT**

23 March 2022
10:30 – 11:30 AM (EDT, New York)

**Written Statement
Andreas Hansen (The Nature Conservancy)**

Our ocean, our future, our responsibility

1. We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives meeting in Lisbon from 27 June to 1 July at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”, with the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, reaffirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources. Greater ambition is required at all levels to address the dire state of the ocean. As leaders and representatives of our Governments, we are determined to act decisively and urgently to improve the health and productivity of the ocean. [Based on A/RES/71/312, OP1]
2. We reaffirm the commitments made in the declaration entitled “Our ocean, our future: call for action”, adopted by the high-level 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, held from 5 to 9 June 2017. [New language]
3. We recognize that the ocean is fundamental to life on our planet and to our future. The ocean is an important source of the planet’s biodiversity and plays a vital role in the climate system and water cycle. The ocean supplies us with oxygen to breathe, contributes to food security, nutrition, and to decent jobs and livelihoods, acts as a sink and reservoir of greenhouse gases and protects biodiversity, provides a means for maritime transportation, forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage, and plays an essential role in sustainable development, a sustainable oceanbased economy and poverty eradication. We underline the interlinkages and synergies between Goal 14 and the other Sustainable Development Goals, and recognize that the implementation of Goal 14 can contribute significantly to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, which is integrated and indivisible in its nature. [Based on A/RES/71/312, OP3, Glasgow Climate Pact]
4. We are therefore deeply alarmed by the global emergency facing the ocean. Sea levels are rising, the ocean is warmer and more acidic. Plastic pollution continues to enter the ocean at an alarming rate, 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. We deeply regret our collective failure to achieve the four targets under Goal 14 that matured in 2020, and we commit to taking urgent action to achieve all targets **as soon as possible now and further increase ambition to halt and reverse the declining health of the ocean without undue delay**. [Based on A/74/630, para 98]
5. We reaffirm that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and are alarmed by the adverse effects of climate change on the ocean and marine life, including

Commented [AH1]: TNC believes the language of “as soon as possible without undue delay” should be deleted as this opens up the possibility that some delay might be justified. Given the declining state of the ocean, this cannot be accepted.

Furthermore, as the recent IPBES report sets out trends in the ocean are on a downward trajectory and further action, beyond the 2020 targets is required. This should be acknowledged explicitly and early.

the rise in ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, deoxygenation, sea level rise, shifts in the abundance and distribution of marine species, including fish, decrease in marine biodiversity, as well as, coastal erosion and extreme weather events and related impacts on coastal communities, as established highlighted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its special report entitled The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. We emphasize that mitigation of climate change and adaptation to its unavoidable effects represent an immediate and urgent priority for ensuring the health, productivity and resilience of the ocean and thus our future. We recognize, in this regard, the particular importance of the Paris Agreement adopted under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and we welcome the decision by the Parties to recognize the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, including marine ecosystems, to deliver crucial services, including acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and reducing vulnerability to climate change, as well as the decision to hold an annual dialogue to strengthen ocean-based action. [Based on A/RES/74/3, OP11, A/RES/73/232, OP1 A/RES/71/312, OP4. Glasgow Climate Pact + new language]

6. We are deeply concerned by the findings about cumulative human impacts on the ocean, including ecosystem degradation and species extinctions and we recognize the need for transformative change, as highlighted by the Second World Ocean Assessment and the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Global Assessment Report. We are committed to halting and reversing the decline in the health of the ocean's ecosystems and biodiversity and to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity. We are encouraged by the commitments by more than 100 Member States to protect at least 30 percent of the global ocean within Marine Protected Areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2030 [and are committed to agreeing an ambitious new Global Biodiversity Framework this year that includes this target](#). We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and its call to support and scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide, [including by restoring degraded marine habitats](#). [New language + language from A/RES/71/312, OP5; on DER A/RES/73/284]
7. We recognize the threat to ocean health caused by devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE), which has exacerbated the problem of marine plastic litter and microplastics in the ocean. We also recognize the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ocean-based economy, and in particular the ocean based economy of small island developing states, which have been disproportionately adversely affected, given their dependence on the ocean-based economy. We affirm that the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and advancing nature-based solutions plays a critical role in building back better, greener and bluer from the COVID-19 pandemic. [New language]
8. We reaffirm that the [United Nations](#) Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out. [Based on A/RES/76/72]
9. We recognize the importance of concluding the work undertaken by the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under 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 [and look forward to welcoming the conclusion of negotiations on a comprehensive new treaty in 2022](#). [New language]

Commented [AH2]: We recommend also referring to the IPCC 2022 AR6 report here.

Commented [AH3]: The health of the ocean is threatened by the twin climate and biodiversity crises. The Paris Agreement is explicitly acknowledged in paragraph 5. So too, should the new Global Biodiversity Framework be in paragraph 6.

Commented [AH4]: The declaration explicitly sets out the need to protect and sustainably manage the ocean. In this paragraph we therefore suggest that restoration is also explicitly called for.

Commented [AH5]: We suggest spelling out UNCLOS in full.

Commented [AH6]: The establishment of a treaty with powers to implement measures in areas beyond national jurisdiction where existing institutions and bodies do not have the remit to do so is critical to protecting the health of the ocean. Negotiations for the BBNJ treaty have (understandably) been delayed during the height of the pandemic but must now be concluded as soon as possible.

10. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and its vision aimed at achieving the science we need for the ocean we want. We support the Decade's mission to generate and use knowledge for the transformational action needed to achieve a healthy, safe and resilient ocean for sustainable development by 2030 and beyond. We fully support the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in preparing and implementing the Decade and commit to supporting these efforts. [New language]
11. Welcoming the outcomes of COP26 and COP15, we stress that science-based and innovative actions [in line with a 45 percent reduction in emissions by 2030 can provide the solutions necessary to overcome challenges in achieving Goal 14, keeping the 1.5 degrees Celsius of the Paris Agreement within reach, in the following ways: [New language]
- a. Informing integrated ocean management, planning and decision-making, through improving our understanding of the impact of cumulative human activities on the ocean and anticipating the impacts of planned ~~or proposed~~ activities and eliminating or minimizing their negative effects, [New language]
 - b. Restoring fish stock to ~~sustainable levels while maximizing continued fishing opportunities~~ ~~levels that produce at maximum sustainable yield~~ in the shortest time feasible ~~by and~~ minimizing waste, ~~unwanted~~ by-catch and discards, ~~through~~ combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing ~~by implementing international, regional and national instruments and approaches as well as including~~ through the use of communication tools and other technological tools, ~~such as electronic monitoring~~, for monitoring, control and surveillance, ~~and applying as well as through the use of~~ an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management that protects essential habitats, ~~species aggregations~~, and promotes collaborative processes for decision-making that include all stakeholders, including small-scale and artisanal fisheries, recognizing the importance of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture [New language]
 - c. Preventing, reducing and controlling marine pollution of all kinds, from both land-and seabased activities, including nutrient pollution, untreated wastewater, solid waste discharges, hazardous substances, pollution from ship wrecks, and anthropogenic underwater noise, through improving our understanding of their sources, pathways and impacts on marine ecosystems, and through contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches, that include improved waste management, ~~and improvements in vessel design~~ [New language]
 - d. Eliminating long-term discharges of marine plastic litter and microplastics into the ocean, including personal protective equipment (PPE), including through contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches, developing new materials for consumer and industrial uses that can fully and effectively biodegrade in order to reduce inputs of marine plastic litter, innovation in product design, remediation of marine plastic litter that is already in the ocean and by embracing a common global vision to reduce additional marine plastic litter pollution to zero, [placeholder for outcome of UNEA 5.2 on international agreement on plastics] [New language + UNEP/EA.3/Res.7]
 - e. Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools, including marine protected areas ~~and other effective area-based conservation measures~~, integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning, through, inter alia, assessing their ecological, social and cultural value and applying the precautionary and ecosystem-based approach, ~~in accordance with national~~

Commented [AH7]: It is important to understand impacts of human activities at proposal stage, not only when permissions to go ahead has already been granted. TNC therefore suggests explicitly referencing this here.

Commented [AH8]: MSY as a concept does not sufficiently recognise the ecosystem-wide impacts of fishing activity. Furthermore, it only works in high-data, monitored fisheries thereby leaving out a large portion of overall fisheries. Language on sustainable levels captures these broader concerns more adequately.

Our next proposed changes relate to the structure of the paragraph which we understand is a list of the things that will support the restoration of fish stocks. We have therefore amended the flow to ensure that combatting IUU is one of the tools we use alongside a range of others and creates coherence in the paragraph overall.

Commented [AH9]: TNC suggests deleting "unwanted" as bycatch should not be wanted in as much as it is impossible to determine what bycatch will be caught.

Commented [AH10]: Electronic monitoring could be a game changer for monitoring and enforcement of sustainable fisheries management and also provide suppliers with the verification data to market their product as sustainable. TNC therefore proposes to include this explicitly as an action-focussed improvement.

Commented [AH11]: This is commonly referred to an ecosystem-based approach and brings consistency across the text.

Commented [AH12]: We suggest adding OECMs to create cohesion between the declaration and the CBD.

legislation, ~~and~~ international law, ~~and best practice including transparent and participatory process~~ [New language]

- f. Developing and implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, reducing disaster risk and enhancing resilience, including through increasing the use of renewable energy technologies, especially ocean-based technologies, reducing the risk of and preparing for ocean-related extreme weather events, including the development of multihazard early warning systems and integrating ecosystems-based approaches for disaster risk reduction at all levels and across all phases of disaster risk reduction and management, and the impacts of sea level rise, reducing emissions from ocean-based sectors such as maritime transportation, and implementing nature-based solutions for, inter alia, carbon sequestration and the prevention of coastal erosion ~~taking into account the importance of protecting critical marine habitats that have demonstrated resilience to climate change impacts~~, [A/RES/76/204 + New language]

Commented [AH13]: There aren't currently international laws for the development of MSP, MPAs, etc. There are guidelines and best practice, case studies, etc and TNC therefore considers it important that these are also recognised in this paragraph.

12. We commit to taking the following science-based and innovative actions on an urgent basis, recognizing that all developing countries, and in particular small island developing states and least developed countries, face capacity challenges that need to be addressed: [New language]

- a. Strengthen international, regional, sub-regional and national scientific observation and data collection efforts and improve the timely ~~and transparent~~ sharing and dissemination of data and knowledge, including by making data widely accessible through open access databases, investing in national statistical systems, standardizing data, ensuring interoperability between databases, and synthesizing data into information for policy- and decision-makers ~~to enable adaptive management~~, and support capacity building in developing countries to improve data collection and analysis, [Based on A/74/630, para 76 and A/RES/74/4, OP27(i)]
- b. Enhance cooperation at the global, regional, sub-regional and national level in order to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices within marine scientific research ~~and marine conservation organizations~~ and to support developing countries in addressing their constraints in access to technology, including through strengthening science, technology and innovation infrastructure, domestic innovation capabilities, absorptive capacities and the capacity of national statistical systems, in particular in the most vulnerable countries, which face the greatest challenges in collecting, analyzing and using reliable data and statistics, [From E/FFDF/2019/3, OP24 and from A/RES/74/4]
- c. Establish effective partnerships, including multi-stakeholder, public-private, cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and scientific partnerships, including by incentivizing the sharing of good practices, giving visibility to well-performing partnerships and creating space for meaningful interaction and networking and capacity building, [New language]
- d. Explore, develop and promote innovative financing solutions for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies, including through public-private sector partnerships and capital market instruments, provide technical assistance to enhance the bankability and feasibility of projects, as well as mainstream the values of marine natural capital into decision-making and address barriers to accessing financing ~~by facilitating innovative financing~~

Commented [AH14]: TNC suggests adding this language to highlight the way new knowledge of ecosystem resilience should influence our conservation efforts.

Commented [AH15]: Transparency of data is a key driver of innovation and accountability while adaptive management will be key in the face of climate change. TNC therefore suggests adding these small amendments.

Commented [AH16]: We suggest adding this text as many NGOs have significant scientific expertise that could be harnessed.

[solutions such as climate- and nature- related debt conversions and issuances](#),
[New language]

- e. Recognize the important role of traditional and local knowledge, innovation and practices held by Indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the role of social science in planning, decision-making and implementation, [based on A/RES/74/19, OP301]
 - f. Empower women and girls, as their equal participation is key in progressing towards a sustainable ocean-based economy and to achieving Goal 14, and mainstream a gender perspective in our work to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and its resources, [New language]
 - g. Ensure that people, especially children and youth, are empowered with relevant knowledge and skills that enable them to understand the importance of and the need to contribute to the health of the ocean, including in decision-making, through promoting and supporting quality education and life-long learning for ocean literacy, [Partly based on A/RES/74/4, OP27(h)]
 - h. Strengthen the science-policy interface for implementing Goal 14 and its targets, to ensure that policy is informed by the best-available science and relevant traditional knowledge, and to highlight policies and actions that may be scalable, through processes such as the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, [New language]
13. We commit to implementing our respective voluntary commitments made in the context of the Conference and urge those who have made voluntary commitments at the 2017 Conference to provide updates on their progress, [New language]
 14. We request the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support the implementation of Goal 14 in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by enhancing inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, through the work of UN-Oceans. [A/RES/71/312, OP14]
 15. We know that a healthy, productive and resilient ocean is critical for our planet, our lives and our future. We call upon all stakeholders to take ambitious and concerted action to accelerate implementation to achieve Goal 14 by 2030.

Commented [AH17]: There is widespread understanding that traditional finance solutions will not get us where we need. So it's incredibly important that countries and international finance institutions support innovative finance solutions and create a good enabling environment for them.

Commented [AH18]: In these overarching paragraphs we suggest the inclusion of the idea of equity and IPLC rights - possibly carrying across some of the language that is currently being negotiated in the CBD negotiations to underline that our actions will be equitable and fair.