Japanese Government Statement on the Political Declaration of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14,
24 March 2022

Japan appreciates continued efforts by co-facilitators, member states and other stakeholders for the draft declaration. Taking this opportunity, we would like to make several specific comments to the text.

With regard to paragraph 3, as marine products has the potential to play an important role in the transition to sustainable food systems, there should be reference to this idea. Accordingly, we suggest addition of following texts drawn from “Blue Food Coalition” in this paragraph.

- “Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture are an integral part of our food systems transformation and have potential to expand their reach in a nature-friendly way.”(in the seventh line between “eradication.” and “We”)  
- “Aquatic food is an important source of nutrition to over 3 billion people and will contribute greatly to our common goal of zero hunger for a growing human population.” (at the end of the paragraph)

Concerning paragraph 4, Japan would like to request some modification of the text as stated at the previous meeting. Now, the third sentence in paragraph 4 reads "half of all living coral has been lost,” but this may cause misunderstanding about its timeframe, or since when it has been lost. Accordingly, it should reflect the language used in the IPBES Global Assessment Report, which reads “approximately half the live coral cover on coral reefs has been lost since 1870s.”  
[Based on Summary for policymakers of the IPBES global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services, p.11]

In paragraph 5, since the current measures to address climate change are taken in line with the Paris Agreement, we do not need to take the trouble to say “adopted under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,” and request to delete that phrase.
In paragraph 6, we support the newly added language about Marine Protected Areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, but would like to request to replace “protect” in the seventh line with “conserve or protect” in accordance with our approach to achieve the commitment.

The newly added paragraph 7 reads “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 would appreciate if any study or research supporting this statement could be presented. If not, we suggest to replace “has exacerbated the problem” with “has a potential impact to the problem” in addition, the essential problem lies in “inappropriate” disposal of PPE, but not in its disposal itself. The wording should reflect this recognition.

Thank you.