



PHILIPPINES

Check against delivery

STATEMENT

2022 United Nations Oceans Conference

"Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions".

Informal Meeting of Intergovernmental Consultations
on the UN Ocean Conference Declaration
24 March 2022 10:00am – 1:00pm, Trusteeship Council
UN Headquarters New York

The Philippines thanks Denmark and Grenada for convening this informal meeting of intergovernmental consultations on the Political Declaration on the 2022 United Nations Oceans Conference and for providing a draft that contains crucial elements to galvanize global action to address the continuing deterioration of world's oceans amidst the unprecedented challenges of the Covid19 pandemic.

We align with the statement of Pakistan delivered on behalf of the G77 and China. In our national capacity, we wish to express the following views:

We welcome the reaffirmation of commitments made in the declaration on "Our ocean, our future: call for action" adopted in 2017 in Paragraph 2. We need to build on these commitments as we negotiate this political declaration.

We recognize the oceans' critical importance as part of the climate system. We are gravely concerned about the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on climate change and sea-level rise. We welcome the stronger language on IPCC and on the ocean-climate nexus in Paragraph 4 as well as the reference to the Second World Ocean Assessment report in Paragraph 5.

At the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, the Philippines set the boldest national goal put forward by any country, committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent in 2030.

As we implement practical climate adaptation and mitigation projects on the ground and move green projects across the Philippine archipelago, we hope that enhanced support for climate-change adaptation and resources for vulnerable states to deal with climate-related disasters, agreed upon at COP26, will materialize. We hope that this will be reflected in the text of the Declaration, including language from the Glasgow Pact on 'scaling up action and support', as suggested by G77 and China in Paragraph 5bis.

The characterization of the “global emergency” facing the ocean in Paragraph 4 underscores the urgency of achieving the four targets under SDG 14 that matured in 2020. We need to take urgent action to achieve all targets as soon as possible without delay.

The deterioration of the health of the oceans should serve as a reminder to uphold UNCLOS as the constitution of the oceans, particularly in addressing the drivers that apply pressure on it, including disputes over access to resources and maritime boundaries. We hope that language on commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of UNCLOS will be included in the text as Paragraph 7bis.

We highlight the progress made, particularly stronger convergence, at the recent 4th Intergovernmental Conference on an internationally legally binding instrument on marine biodiversity under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea under President Rena Lee of Singapore. We would like to see the work concluded at the 5th IGC in August this year and hope that this common aspiration for a specific timeframe, shared by many States, will be reflected in Paragraph 9.

The onset of the Ocean Decade is an opportunity to integrate ocean science, indigenous knowledge and innovation in policy-making for sustainable ocean management. We welcome the listing of science-based and innovative actions that could provide the solutions necessary to overcome challenges in achieving Goal 14 under Paragraphs 11 and 12.

Among the drivers exerting pressure on the world’s oceans, marine plastic pollution is a global and urgent problem. The Philippines welcomes the outcomes of the recent UNEA 5.2, particularly on an internationally binding legal instrument by 2023 to end plastic pollution. Stronger language in Paragraph 11(d) reflecting this would be welcome, in this regard.

Finally, we reaffirm that **UNCLOS is the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We emphasize the importance of retaining Paragraph 8 and appreciate the verbatim language from the Omnibus Oceans Resolution.** As the international community works together to end the pandemic and recover better, addressing the drivers that exert pressure on the world’s oceans should remain paramount. As a maritime country, attaching great importance to the sustainable use of the oceans, we look forward to the 2022 Ocean Conference and its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 14.

Thank you, Co-Facilitators. END