



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”

(24 March 2022, CR 1, 2, 3, New York)

Thank you very much.

Turkey would like to thank the co-facilitators for organizing this second informal meeting for the declaration of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference to support the implementation of SDG14.

We have carefully examined the first draft of the declaration, dated 14 February 2022 as presented by the co-facilitators.

As always, we are ready to contribute to the consultation process constructively with a view to reaching a consensus-based text. On the other hand, there are indeed some issues which are critical for our delegation, and which were not reflected in the first draft. For that reason, and in line with the spirit of flexibility, we will highlight only the two most important issues for your consideration in the next revision of the draft.

Before going into details however, we would like to stress the importance of preparing a concise and action-oriented declaration which focuses on those issues that are directly related to SDG 14. In order to ensure that this high-level declaration is supported by all countries, it will also be necessary to revert to previously agreed language, particularly where sensitive and clearly controversial issues are concerned.

1) With regards to the newly added sentence in para 6, that is about being “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”, we would like draw attention to the fact that the 30%

target is still under consideration in the context of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the UN Convention on Biodiversity for its adoption at COP15.

We do believe that at this stage it is not appropriate to prejudice the outcome of that process, by imposing a position of a group of countries to an ongoing global process. We rather prefer to see a placeholder for the outcome of COP15 on that matter.

2) With regard to the new paragraph 8, former paragraph 7, concerning the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Turkey had conveyed its views in oral and written form not only in March 2020, but also at the first informal consultation on 1 February 2022.

As the first draft at hand does not include the changes that we consider crucial, we are obliged to reiterate our position that paragraph 8 must 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 once again that both SDG 14 (Target 14.c) and the Declaration entitled “Our Ocean, Our Future: Call for Action” adopted at the UN Ocean Conference of 2017 refer to UNCLOS as providing “**the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources**”. The declaration for the 2022 Conference, which falls in the exact same context, should reflect the same focused wording¹, and should avoid non-consensual language.

The position of Turkey along with a number of other Member States regarding the current language used in the paragraph 8 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 which we trust they will ensure, and the purpose of reaching a consensus-based and focused text, we kindly request that the language used in the Declaration of 2017 with regard to the reference to UNCLOS be preserved in the draft declaration of 2022.

Thank you.

¹ *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”.*