

Country statement of Bangladesh by Dr. A.K Abdul Momen, MP, the Hon'ble Foreign Minister on 30th Jun at the Plenary Hall between 12pm to 1 pm

Mr. President, Co chairs, Excellencies, distinguished representatives, and ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon to you all

I have the pleasure and honour to deliver this statement on the 2nd UN Ocean conference, on the theme “ Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: Stock taking, partnerships and solutions” organized by the United Nations, Portugal and Kenya. Let me begin by congratulating and expressing our gratitude to the Governments of Portugal and Kenya for co hosting this conference and commending the organizers for the warm welcome and excellent arrangements. It is my privilege and unique opportunity to be here in the beautiful Country of Portugal to attend the 2nd Un Ocean Conference-2022.

Excellencies

The ocean supports life on the planet by providing food, climate regulation, and other essential ecosystem services. Perceived as humankind's last frontier, our relation to the ocean is not only economical, but also social and spiritual. At the same time, the ocean is highly impacted by human activities, including overfishing, the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, ocean warming , and sea level rise as a direct consequence of climate change, other anthropogenic activities on marine ecosystems, fisheries and wildlife and the resulting ecological, social and economic impacts.

The world now understands that healthy oceans are critical for sustaining life, eliminating poverty, and promoting prosperity. They define a make-or-break significance for Bangladesh. Only a meter rise in the sea-level can mean inundation of more than one third of the most fertile lands of the country and the displacement of more than twenty million of its inhabitants – while exploitation of even a meager five percent of resources of its maritime areas could essentially render almost a percentage point jump in its GDP. Let us not forget that as a species, while in one way we have shifted the balance of power from Mother Nature in our favour, it has brought with itself unprecedented consequences. The silent forces, which run the basic life-sustaining mechanisms of the planet, have started to assert themselves and we have no other option but to accommodate the overwhelming forces of the nature and their manifestation.

Excellencies,

Today we have gathered here with a single purpose : to accelerate efforts for the implementation of Sustainable development Goal 14. We are hopeful that the conference will take appropriate steps in renewing and reinforcing our commitments to take urgent action to

achieve all the targets of SDG 14. Bangladesh's proximity to the Bay of Bengal and its dependence on seas makes it a country at the forefront of the dangers of climate change. Under the guidance of Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh settled the maritime boundary issues with both the neighbours and is poised to collaboratively utilize the resources.

Bangladesh understands that marine science is important for eradicating poverty, contributing to food security, conserving the world's marine environment and resources, helping to predict and respond to natural and anthropogenic events and promoting the sustainable development of the oceans and seas. They are prerequisites for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development) and are crucial to humanity's ability to ensure a sustainable and equitable recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Gaps in human and institutional capacities, inadequate resources and knowledge, continue to prevent many developing States from developing their knowledge in ocean science or benefiting from existing knowledge. Disparities persist in scientific capacity in terms of financial, technological, and human resources, in particular between developed and developing countries, and contribute to the uneven distribution of scientific knowledge. Capacity development is therefore paramount. Sustainable management of the ocean requires relevant ocean data, information and knowledge to be generated, integrated and rendered accessible.

Nature-based solutions to adaptation and resilience are gaining momentum throughout the world. Prediction, forecasting and modelling applications and services are essential for delivering societal outcomes and benefits of ocean knowledge for early warning systems for ocean hazards.

Bangladesh is ready to cooperate in keeping with its capabilities to actively engage with the developed countries willing to transfer marine science and marine technology on fair and reasonable terms and conditions in accordance with the provisions of part XIV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Funding Initiatives for observations, monitoring, capacity development and/or data management programmes which require long-term commitment for recurrent activities are hardly available to the developing countries.

Global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have affected both ocean science activities and investment in science. The low level of international investment runs contrary to the ambitions of numerous countries to promote a sustainable ocean economy as a pillar of future economic development.

International research partnerships can provide equipment, expertise, funding, or other resources to support and build the capacity of local research facilities and scientists who may not have previously had access to them.

The government of Bangladesh has declared an area totaling about 8.8% of its Exclusive Economic Zone as the Marine Protected Areas and implemented its National Plan of Action to eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in 2019 including banning of destructive fishing.

The government has amended Bangladesh Ship Recycle Act 2018 and set a target of compliance of The Hong Kong Convention by 2023 and has announced new actions aimed at ensuring safe ship recycling by 2023. Bangladesh is the first amongst developing countries to take initiative to ban and manufacture of single use plastic shopping bags since 2002. Instead, the government has made use of bio-degradable jute bags mandatory for packaging various commodities.

As a measure to protect, conserve and enhance the ecological sustainability of the fish and other marine species, the Government of Bangladesh has already taken legislative measures and committed resources to continue 65 days fishing ban on all kinds of fishes and 8 months ban on juvenile fish of less than 25 cm for Hilsha species every year in the coastal waters and EEZ of Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we are here to discuss a course of our future. A future – which would in all possible likelihood, be very different from the past or any record of it. Today, we are here to discuss the oceans and the life under water as we believe that oceans would not only be a source of livelihoods and prosperity in the near future, but they would be critically important for the very sustenance of life and the survival of the human species in the days ahead.

The Oceans are our mothers. We are sustained and disciplined by them. Let us never forget where we came from – so we may treat our origin with care and respect. That would be the best and only option for all of us as a whole. We still do not have anywhere else but this Blue Planet to call our home.

I thank you all.