

Statement by H.E. Mr. PHAM Quang Hieu
Deputy Foreign Minister
Head of Delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
at the 2022 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
(Lisbon, 27 June - 1 July 2022)

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to the Portuguese and Kenyan governments for hosting this important UN Conference in this beautiful city of Lisbon. I believe that under the able leadership of the Presidents of the Portuguese Republic and the Republic of Kenya, the Conference will arrive at successful outcomes. Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China delivered by the distinguished representative of Pakistan.

Mr. President,

2. As a coastal state in the South China Sea, also referred to as the East Sea, Viet Nam has a coastline of approximately 3260 km, with more than half of the population and GDP are oceans-based. It is clear to each and every Vietnamese that the life and future of our people is closely intertwined with those of the sea. Therefore, Viet Nam has attached great importance to the sustainable use and conservation of the oceans and its resources. The implementation of SDG14 is high on our national and international agenda in various fields, from socioeconomic development, tourism, to the protection and preservation of marine environment.

3. In the last few years, as with other member states, Viet Nam has carried out concrete measures to respond to the urgency of maritime and ocean issues that delegates have discussed in the last few days. Since the last Ocean Conference, our national Strategy and mechanisms for sustainable ocean-based economic development have been further developed. Attention is adequately paid to marine plastic pollution. Sustainable fisheries and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing are national policies. Marine ecosystem is addressed in a holistic manner, including through a number of marine-protected zones. Climate change is our top priority. The “net-zero” commitment declared at COP26 is now fastidiously implemented with a national action plan. The Strategy for Sustainable Development of Viet Nam’s Marine Economy identifies climate change and sea-level rise as urgent issues and sets forth concrete directions and actions. The inter-agency mechanism for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda regularly

reviews progress, including on SDG14, reinforcing the holistic and whole of government approach.

Mr. President,

4. Viet Nam understands that our ocean issues are part and parcel of those of the international community. We therefore profoundly share the concerns expressed by member states in the last few days. The future of our oceans is not yet sustainably ensured. Our efforts are increasing but not yet sufficient. They are all the more urgently needed in the face of myriad challenges, including the declining health of the ocean, climate change, sea level rise, marine pollution, ecosystem and biodiversity degradation and the adverse impacts of extreme weather phenomena. In order to rise up to such mounting urgency, allow me to emphasize the following points.

5. First, international law of the sea, as reflected in UNCLOS, must be fully and effectively implemented. Only by doing so can we strengthen the comprehensive framework provided for by UNCLOS to regulate all activities in the oceans and seas. Only by doing so can we have peace and stability, the very foundation for sustainable development. All disputes must be resolved by peaceful means, in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter and UNCLOS, with full respect for legal processes provided for by the Convention. Normal economic activities of coastal States in their maritime zones established in accordance with UNCLOS must be respected. We also look forward to further development of international instruments, including that on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction to be concluded in August.

6. Second, further international efforts to implement SDG 14 must be undertaken. Time is not on our side. This must be incorporated in national plans and policies. Broader adherence to UNCLOS and related instruments in various marine issues should be promoted. Further initiatives must be explored, seizing opportunities brought about by the robust development of new technologies and tools, including through the UN Decade of Ocean Science. New approaches and research into emerging issues should be further advanced, such as the impact of environmental issues on seafood security that Viet Nam is going to undertake in collaboration with IOC and regional partners.

7. Third, international cooperation and assistance are key to successful implementation of SDG 14. We are heartened by new examples of partnerships in the last few years. But more innovative forms and resources are much needed. Such efforts may include the standardization and facilitation of marine research and data sharing. Closer coordination among all states, stakeholders and sectors, as well as more effective interface between science and technology are also ways forward. Transfer of marine technology and expertise is critical to address the discrepancy in marine capacity among states. Multi-sector assistance to developing countries are critical to facilitate their implementation of SDG14 as well as climate commitments. This is all the more necessary as various

countries are still faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, with devastating impact on fishing, aquaculture, marine tourism and shipping. In this regard, let me express our appreciation to our development partners for their kind assistance for Viet Nam's marine development.

8. On our part, Viet Nam has seriously taken efforts to join international efforts. We helped initiate the Group of Friends of UNCLOS in New York, with 115 members. Viet Nam co-hosted recent international conferences on marine litter and plastic pollution, as well as on climate change adaption. Under Viet Nam's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2020, ASEAN and its partners in the East Asia Summit adopted a statement on marine sustainability. At this Conference, we reiterate our commitment to implementing SDG 14, as well as actively participating *in the negotiation of an agreement on plastic pollution*. We support the political declaration to be adopted by the Conference, which was ably facilitated by Denmark and Grenada.

Mr. President,

9. If one wants to go fast, he goes alone. But if he wants to go further, go together. Let me conclude by reiterating Viet Nam's unwavering commitment to taking joint actions for the blue oceans, oceans of peace, solidarity and development, oceans for our future generations.

I thank you all for your attention./.