



**Statement by José Truda Palazzo Jr., Institutional Development Officer,  
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Distinguished delegates, I speak on behalf of the Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute, of Divers for Sharks and the *Un Solo Mar* coalition of Brazilian and Uruguayan NGOs.

I would first like to express our gratitude towards all countries which just announced the establishment of new Marine Protected Areas. This is what our shared ocean now needs most, especially strictly protected, no-take MPAs where the fragile balance of life in the ocean can be restored.

There can be no future for the ocean if we don't act urgently and diligently to fully protect more, larger, and more representative areas of the global marine ecosystem. It's about time that we abandon the anachronistic paradigm of maximum sustainable yield – and of seeing the ocean as a mere provider of consumer products - in favor of a more informed management perspective based on the respect for the fragile systems we cannot restore once damaged.

Further, we have a duty to act not only to maintain extractive industries based on ocean resources, but also to recognize, respect and protect the rights of non-extractive users of the sea, the immense community of Ecotourism and Diving operators, professionals and practitioners, millions of jobs of really sustainable enterprises which the degradation of the ocean is putting at risk. It is also urgent that we go beyond the promises heard here and immediately ban deep-sea mining, conclude a strong treaty for the conservation of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions and promote a profound reform of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, which are repeatedly ignoring the advice of their own scientific committees which are crying for lesser fishing quotas and less bycatch of endangered marine life.

Distinguished delegates, dr. Rashid Sumaila mentioned yesterday at a side-event here that people talk a lot about food security for people, and rightly so, but no one is talking about food security for whales, or for sharks, or for seabirds. Fish are not just protein for human consumption. We must make sure that no fishery is exempt from mandatory measures towards not only catch sustainability, but also mandatory restraint to ensure that the ocean food webs can function properly in the long-term.

Lastly, and with utmost respect, may we ask that at future gatherings like this, civil society is heard first, not last, in your proceedings. We the people give you your mandates for action; we the people want to be properly heard. Thank you.