I’d like to start by saying I am in complete agreement with this section of the United Nations General Assembly note A/78/880.

“The ocean is in a state of emergency as increasing eutrophication, acidification, ocean warming, deoxygenation and plastic pollution worsen its health. In addition, the alarming trend of overfishing persists, leading to over one third of global fish stocks being fished at biologically unsustainable levels.”

In fact, here is the mission statement from my company:

“BeachNecessities.com is an eCommerce and beach community / content site that forges the online shopping experience for the $15B+ US beach goods market with a focus on sustainability, both in the products we carry as well as protecting the health of beaches, the ocean, lakes, rivers and streams, as well as the human race, given the adverse impacts from climate change, overfishing / illegal aquatic wildlife trade and plastic pollution. It's what we like to refer to as effective altruism. While many people equate the beach with the ocean, for others this could be a favorite lake, pond, river or stream so we define beach as any place you can dig your toes in some sand, go for a swim and just enjoy yourself.”

Therefore in principle we agree the ocean, along with lakes, rivers and streams, are stressed / under threat and need relief to reverse the decline. That being said, we need to look at the root cause(s) of why this is the case and from our perspective 85%+ of the issues stems from business / commercial activity. Ocean acidification, deoxygenation and warming is due primarily to the burning of fossil fuels, plastic pollution is also related to fossil fuels and poor waste management practices and overfishing is caused by commercial fishing fleets, not sustenance fishing.

If business / commercial activity are the causes of the vast majority of issues, the private sector has to be held accountable for this behavior. Yet in the 20 pages of A/78/880, there are only 3 instances of the phrase blue economy, only 1 relevant as 2 are in the footnotes, 2 instances of the word business, only 1 is relevant, 0 instances of the word commercial, 3 instances of the word corporation and 0 are relevant and 5 instances of the word private sector where all 5 are relevant so 13 instances total and only 7 relevant in 20 pages. It strikes me the business / commercial / private sector needs to have a much higher profile for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference as well as be far more engaged than they seem to be.

Is there a business / commercial advisory group steering committee? If not, I would highly recommend this be developed and implemented asap so that we can truly start planning for the new Blue Economy1 that is so desperately needed. Without more private sector engagement, SDG 14 will prove impossible.

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1 Blue Economy, https://oceanfdn.org/blue-economy/