



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE  
UNITED NATIONS | NEW YORK

**STATEMENT BY MR NATHANIEL KHNG,  
COUNSELLOR (LEGAL), PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE PREPARATORY  
MEETING FOR THE 2025 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO  
SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14, DISCUSSION ON THE PROPOSED THEMES  
FOR THE OCEAN ACTION PANELS,  
NEW YORK, 2 JULY 2024**

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Excellencies,

1 I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting and would also like to reiterate Singapore's appreciation to Costa Rica and France for taking on the responsibility of co-hosting the Third UN Ocean Conference. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

2 The Third UN Ocean Conference will be held at a critical juncture as the ocean is in a state of emergency with threats caused by cumulative human impacts being the foremost cause for concern. The overarching theme of this Conference is appropriate, as there is an urgent need, and an important opportunity presented by this Conference, for the international community to accelerate action and mobilise all actors to conserve and sustainably use the oceans and their resources. In relation to the Ocean Action Panels, my delegation wishes to make three points.

3 First, the discussions in the Ocean Action Panels must build on the progress that the international community has made towards the achievement of SDG 14. We should keep up the momentum from our achievements at the 2017 and 2022 UN Ocean Conferences, including the declarations that were adopted, the partnerships forged and the contributions pledged.

4            Second, it is important that the discussions in the Ocean Action Panels strike a balance between conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources. There is a need to achieve and maintain the right balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. This should be a guiding principle for not just the Ocean Action Panels, but also the political declaration and the Conference as a whole.

5            Third, turning to the themes of the ten Ocean Action Panels, my delegation is in principle supportive of the themes that have been proposed in the background note. We are pleased that our suggestion, which was to include a theme on SDG 14.c on the implementation of international law as reflected in UNCLOS, was taken on board in the proposed ninth theme. The implementation of international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which the General Assembly continues to reaffirm (most recently in resolution 78/69 of 5 December 2023) as setting out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, remains critical for the achievement of SDG 14. We strongly object to the proposal that was just made by China, which is inconsistent with agreed language in SDG 14.c. The only change to the ninth theme that we would be able to accept would be the deletion of the reference to “implementing agreements”, which was proposed by Argentina, given that this would be consistent with the wording of SDG 14.c and similar themes for panels at the previous Ocean Conferences. The concept papers for the Ocean Action Panels that will be prepared can then guide the discussions toward consideration of the implementing agreements of UNCLOS.

6            I wish to conclude by assuring the co-hosts that they have the full support of the delegation of Singapore.

7            Thank you.

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