



## **Statement by TÜRKİYE**

### **Preparatory Meeting for**

**The 2025 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  
(Tuesday, 2 July 2024, Trusteeship Council Chamber  
(10 a.m. to 1 p.m.)**

### **(Themes of the Ocean Action Panels)**

Thank you, Mr. Co-chair,

Oceans and seas cover two-thirds of our Home.

Our future and livelihood rely on oceans and seas.

Oceans are essential to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and resilient development.

Yet, they are under threat, more than ever.

Overfishing, pollution, ocean acidification, plastic pollution and invasive species are only some of the man-made pressures which are triggered by climate change.

We believe that the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14) provides an essential framework for addressing ocean-related issues.

SDG14 plays a vital role in achieving the entire UN sustainability agenda.

Türkiye welcomes the organization of the third UN Oceans Conference to support the implementation of SDG14 as well as this Preparatory Meeting with a view to deciding on the themes for the Ocean Action Panels as well as considering the elements for a declaration.

We wish all the success to the Governments of Costa Rica and France for a fruitful Conference in 2025.

As surrounded on three sides by the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Aegean Sea, Türkiye has been actively contributing to the global and regional efforts to achieve SDG14.

We welcome most of the themes for the Ocean Action Panels of the 2025 UN Oceans Conference as proposed in the Note by the Secretary General, A/78/880, in particular sustainable fisheries management, cooperation at the regional level, tackling marine pollution, ocean-climate-biodiversity linkages, sustainable ocean-based economies as well as mobilizing finance.

First of all, considering that SDG14 remains the most under-invested SDG, the solution mainly seems to lie in ensuring sufficient level of investment. In this regard, Panel 10 to be dedicated to mobilizing finance will be one of the critical Panels to accelerate the implementation of SDG14. It could be considered as a cross-cutting theme as well.

Secondly, we consider cooperation at the regional level key for the achievement of SDG14. The Regional Seas Conventions, which are primarily developed under UNEP. These Conventions has helped to internalize the SDGs in their strategic documents including in their Action Plans and to coordinate the national monitoring of the SDGs through the regional monitoring and reporting mechanisms. For that purpose, we very much value the third proposed theme of the Ocean Action Panels, which focuses on the cooperation at the regional level. We expect to consider the important role of Regional Seas Conventions in this Panel, including those under the Barcelona Convention for the Mediterranean and the Bucharest Convention for the Black Sea.

Thirdly, we have continents of waste in the oceans. In the framework of the proposed fourth theme, during the Conference, at the Panel, it would be essential to highlight in particular the challenges of plastic pollution as well as opportunities for solution in the oceans. In that regard, we need to underline the ongoing negotiation process for the development of an internationally legally binding instrument on plastics pollution. Zero waste initiatives as well as practices are also important to address the ongoing accumulation of plastics in the oceans at the global, regional, national and local levels.

However, regarding the proposed theme 9, where the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is presented as the only legal framework for regulating all activities in the oceans and seas, we would like to underline the following:

Türkiye is not a party to the UNCLOS and has consistently expressed that it does not agree with the view that this Convention has a “universal and unified character”.

Türkiye also maintain that the UNCLOS is not the only legal framework which regulates all activities in the oceans and seas. These concerns and objections have also been raised by a number of other States throughout the years.

We would also like to take this opportunity to note that the reasons which have prevented Türkiye from being a party to the UNCLOS remain valid. Türkiye supports international efforts to establish a regime of the seas that is based on the principle of equity and is acceptable to all States.

However, in our opinion, the Convention does not provide sufficient safeguards for particular geographical situations and, as a consequence, does not take into consideration conflicting interests and sensitivities stemming from special circumstances.

Furthermore, the Convention does not allow States to make reservations to its articles. Hence, although we agree with the Convention in its general intent, and with most of its provisions, we are unable to become a party to it due to those prominent shortcomings.

In this regard, Türkiye also wishes to draw attention to the risks posed by erroneous interpretations of international law and the invocation of the UNCLOS to justify maximalist claims, especially as regards delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas.

Therefore, Türkiye disassociates herself from the reference made to UNCLOS. Her participation in the activities organized within the framework of the "Preparatory process of the 2025 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" or the approval of it cannot be construed as a change in the legal position of Türkiye with regard to UNCLOS.

We ask from the Secretariat to re-formulate the references to UNCLOS in the document A/78/880 from this point of view.

We further ask the revision of the title of the Panel 9 as follows:

*"Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing relevant international law **including** UNCLOS and its implementing agreements"*

OR

*"Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected, **among others**, in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing agreements"*

Türkiye, as always, remains ready and willing to continue working with the international community to better protect, cherish and thrive our oceans, in light of international law and best practices.

Thank you.