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**STATEMENT BY**

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MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, AND  
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**AT**

**THIRD UNITED NATIONS OCEANS CONFERENCE**

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NICE, FRANCE**

**Excellencies,**

**Colleague Ministers,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Ghana aligns herself with the statement delivered on behalf of the G77 and China by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq. We take the floor at this time to make the following remarks in our national capacity. Before doing so, I wish , on behalf of His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, to extend warm greetings from the Government and People of Ghana and express our appreciation to the Republic of France and Costa Rica for hosting this crucial gathering.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

From the Gulf of Guinea to the coasts of the Pacific, the ocean sustains life, economies, and cultures, especially in developing countries like Ghana, where the sea is not only a resource but a lifeline. For millions in our coastal communities, the ocean is their pantry, their workplace, and their heritage. Yet this shared lifeline is under threat.

Ghana considers Sustainable Development Goal 14 not merely a target, but a necessity. As a coastal developing nation, the ocean underpins our food security, livelihoods, climate resilience, and national identity. Recognising this, Ghana has taken significant steps, legislatively, institutionally, and practically, to protect our marine ecosystems and support the communities that depend on them.

However, like many countries across the Global South, we face complex and compounding challenges. Overfishing, illegal and destructive fishing practices, pollution, and habitat loss are depleting our marine resources and eroding biodiversity. Weak enforcement capacity, limited research infrastructure, and the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels and ocean acidification, intensify these threats. Unregulated coastal mining and insufficient community engagement further undermine conservation efforts.

Despite these hurdles, Ghana remains firmly committed to advancing SDG 14. We are implementing transformative policies and actions to ensure the long-term health of our oceans.

We have updated our National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy, are advancing a new Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, and have developed a Sustainable Ocean Plan. These frameworks are critical to fighting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and to fostering sustainable use of marine resources. Our Marine Fisheries Management Plan introduces science-based strategies, including seasonal fishing closures, vessel moratoriums, and the designation of Marine Protected Areas. These measures are already yielding positive signs of fish stock recovery. To ensure effective enforcement, Ghana has invested in electronic monitoring systems, upgraded vessel tracking capabilities, and is strengthening maritime patrols. We are also enhancing our legal frameworks to support greater transparency, accountability, and compliance.

But legislation alone is not enough. Ghana is scaling up community-based approaches, promoting co-management systems, and supporting alternative livelihoods for small-scale fishers. We are also advancing aquaculture development to ease pressure on wild stocks and ensure inclusive, sustainable economic growth. At the regional and global levels, Ghana actively engages in cooperative frameworks, including the Abidjan Convention and the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and is participating in the West Africa Coastal Areas Management Programme (WACA).

### **Excellencies,**

We believe that regional solidarity and global partnerships are indispensable to ocean resilience. In addressing pollution, Ghana is implementing the National Plastic Management Policy and the Circular Economy Framework for the Plastic Sector (CEF-PS) Project. These initiatives aim to reduce marine plastic waste, foster innovation, and create green jobs by supporting local recycling industries and biodegradable alternatives.

Importantly, Ghana is committed to achieving Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by establishing and effectively managing new Marine Protected Areas, such as the proposed site at Cape Three Points. We are also developing a National Integrated Coastal Management Policy, which will provide an overarching framework to guide sustainable coastal and marine development in Ghana. Mr. President, achieving SDG 14 requires science, innovation, financing, and partnerships, at scale. Ghana calls for increased international cooperation and

investment to bolster research capacity, enforcement technologies, and inclusive governance systems that place coastal communities at the heart of ocean stewardship.

As we meet here in Nice, let this Conference serve as a turning point. Let it reaffirm our shared resolve to act decisively, inclusively, and urgently. Ghana stands ready to collaborate, regionally and globally, to safeguard our oceans, protect livelihoods, and build a sustainable blue economy for future generations. Let us seize this moment to catalyse the bold partnerships and scalable solutions the ocean urgently needs.

I thank you.