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Excellencies, Delegates, Esteemed Colleagues,

Ocean Conservancy would like to extend its gratitude and congratulations to the co-hosts, Portugal and Kenya, for having convened us here on this very important occasion, as well as for their decisive, collaborative, and inclusive leadership approach that has ensured the broad representation and the substantive commitments we have seen over the past few days.

All of us here present today and virtually attending from around the world continue to be concerned by some of the most pressing priorities and actions needed to improve and protect the health of our ocean and climate.

Acting to stem the climate crisis is the most important thing we can do to protect ocean health, and ocean-climate solutions should be a larger part of how we reach our climate mitigation and adaptation goals. These are actions to reduce greenhouse gases-like well sited marine renewable energy, transitioning to zero-emissions shipping, and reducing plastic that are 90% fossil fuels, as well as action to improve resilience and adaptive capacity of communities and ocean and coastal ecosystems. These actions will directly impact people in coastal communities. It is critical that high level climate commitments, including those made in Nationally Determined Contributions to achieve the Paris Agreement or here at the UN Ocean Conference in support of SDG14, should be accompanied by concrete implementation plans and the necessary financing and capacity-building instruments to execute them to protect our ocean. We don't have a moment to lose.

Action on shipping provides some of the greatest opportunities for ocean climate action. Shipping emissions count for a gigaton of greenhouse gasses each year. More action is needed at all levels to address both domestic and international shipping emissions.

As the Arctic continues to lose its sea ice coverage at a dramatic rate, the safe area for open-water vessels for 90 days of the year has increased by 35 percent. The risk of increasing transshipment through the Arctic is enormous, and it represents a clear and present danger for the region's marine ecosystem and the communities that depend on the Central Arctic Ocean.

Considering that risk, we are proud to announce that 5 companies, including global shippers like DHL, Hillebrand-GORI, Inditex, Fisker, FGI Universal, have signed on to the Arctic Corporate Shipping Pledge. By signing this Pledge, these companies commit to avoiding shipping or transporting goods through the Arctic, and to address their own climate impacts.

Ocean action is climate action, and climate action is ocean action. The ocean must be viewed as a source of solutions, even as climate impacts compound on one another in coastal areas. Sea level rise, increasingly severe storms, warming, acidification, and deoxygenation, and other stressors are happening

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all at once to our coastal ecosystems and communities. Therefore, we must prioritize and support those who experience these impacts the most – including Indigenous Peoples, island nations, and marginalized communities – with adaptation, resilience, and financing instruments.

Thank you for this opportunity today. Ocean Conservancy looks forward to supporting a successful and transformative UN Ocean Conference.

Janis Searles Jones  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ocean Conservancy