



PERMANENT MISSION
OF ICELAND TO THE UN

**Statement by
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**UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14
Preparatory Meeting**

15 February 2017

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly for hosting this preparatory meeting for the Ocean Conference to be held in June this year. I would also like to express my delegation's support for the co-facilitators appointed to oversee the preparatory process and assure them of our active and constructive participation throughout the process.

Oceans are essential to all life on Earth. In fact, oceans comprise about 70% of the surface of our planet. It is imperative for all of us, individually and collectively, to keep our oceans clean and the marine environment healthy, as confirmed in Sustainable Development Goal 14. By harnessing the potentials of the oceans and seas, we provide great potentials for innovation and growth in many sectors and contribute to poverty eradication and sustained economic growth.

We are here today in preparation for the Ocean Conference in June this year. We all have to be vigilant that the conference fulfills its mandate to support the implementation of SDG14 by leading together innovative ideas and partnerships. This requires broad participation of various stakeholders, including IGOs and NGOs, the private sector, civil society, academia and the scientific community.

The universality of the 2030 Agenda should be the guiding light in all our work. The sustainable development goals are integrated and indivisible and we must never lose sight of that. Resolution 70/303 on modalities for the conference forms the basis for our work and lays down important principles for the way forward.

Excellencies

I would like to thank the Secretary- General for the background note provided towards the end of last year. The note is enlightening and gives a good overview of the task at hand. It furthermore reflects the indivisibility of the sustainable development goals and the importance of a holistic approach towards their achievement.

Allow me now to touch briefly upon the themes suggested for the partnership dialogues of the conference. My delegation supports the seven themes identified and suggested in the background note. They give in our view a fair representation of the targets of SDG14. They also represent a good balance between preservation on one hand and the sustainable use of marine resources on the other hand, implying of course the necessary conservation measures. The more cross-cutting themes are very important as they underline that UNCLOS is the framework within which ocean-related activities must be carried out. The emphasis on science-based knowledge and management, as well as capacity building and partnerships, are without a doubt key components for our success in implementing Goal 14.

As a country heavily dependent on the sustainable use of living marine resources Iceland has much to contribute, but we also appreciate the opportunity to learn about other experiences. We look forward to engaging with you in more detail in the coming days and months on this important issue.