Statement # 2

Thank you Mr. Co-facilitator,

This morning we highlighted the importance of sustaining existing ocean observations and research to underpin Goal 14 and building ocean research capacity through the transfer of marine technology, with resulting benefits for all nations, and in particular SIDS and Least Developed Countries.

In response to this challenge, Member States of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO are developing a proposal for an *International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.* Such a decade would provide a framework for concerted action of all states to achieve the targets in SDG 14, while contributing to other related SDGs and progressing *"Towards the ocean we need for the future we want".*

The Decade would run from 2021 to 2030, supporting the global agenda and facilitating marine scientific research and its application, contributing to the development of related capacity within and across regions—in line with the provisions of SDG target 14.a, but also responding to the needs identified in the SAMOA Pathway.

The process of designing and implementing the *International Decade of Ocean Science* could strengthen cooperation between the different organizations and institutions involved in ocean science and observations and establish closer relationship between science and ocean policy and decision-makers.

We ask you, Member States and organizations, to join us in this effort, shaping it with your ideas, requirements and your contributions, turning it into a grand partnership to achieve Goal 14, and to ensure that by 2030 we have the ocean we need, and the future we want.

In view of the great significance of the cultural heritage contained in the oceans, UNESCO would also suggest inclusion in the discussions of the UN Oceans Conference in June an element on underwater cultural heritage protection, research and beneficial use, noting that the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage is relevant in this context.

Thank you.