

SESSION 1: THEMES FOR THE PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUES

Firstly, Canada would like to express general support for the proposed partnership dialogue themes. Given that there will be limited time at the Conference to address all ten targets under SDG 14, it makes sense to group similar targets together for the dialogues.

Canada would also like to reiterate its full commitment to achieving the targets identified under SDG 14. Our government has identified numerous priorities directly linked to SDG 14. We have not only made it a domestic priority to

protect 10% of Canada's marine and coastal areas by 2020, but have self-imposed the target of protecting 5% by the end of this year. We are working hard to identify all measures, including other effective area-based conservation measures, which can justifiably be considered to contribute towards the 10% target. We recognize that what we report, and how we report, must be ambitious, transparent and credible, and we have committed to facilitate discussions in this regard.

Our government has committed to reinvesting in science, and to use scientific

evidence when making fisheries and ecosystems management decisions. It is also part of our mandate to take into account the impacts of climate change when making management decisions.

When it comes to “making fisheries sustainable”, we feel that the primary focus of the dialogue should remain on the common goal of recovering fish stocks and restoring stocks to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yields. In doing so, we need to account for the risks posed by factors which we

do not control, such as the impacts of climate change.

The Secretary General's report remarked that efforts to address overfishing are often undermined by a lack of science-based management. As such, the fourth dialogue session should also discuss ways to ensure science-based decision-making in fisheries management.

Increasing scientific knowledge, and developing research capacity and transfer of marine technology is a priority. Knowledge is an

overarching theme that affects the successful implementation of all of the targets under SDG 14. Ensuring cooperation and integration across disciplines and interests should be a key consideration under this dialogue. Cooperation among scientists, and between scientists, policymakers, Indigenous groups and stakeholders will be vital to success under this theme.

The effective implementation of international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, is integral to the success of achieving sustainable fisheries and oceans governance. The Preparatory

Committee meetings currently taking place on marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction show the importance of international law in this context and we look forward to making good progress in these discussions.

As the Secretary General's report reflected, the legal framework for the oceans is complex. In addition to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing agreements, such as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, there are a range of other global treaties and soft law instruments in place. In the seventh partnership

dialogue it will be important to explore the full range of instruments and their state of implementation. This includes the voluntary guidelines and self-assessments developed through the Food and Agriculture Organization, through to binding measures such as the work of regional fisheries bodies.

Lastly, we endorse the proposed substantive dialogue on increasing the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries, and addressing the issue of access for small-scale fishers.

Before concluding, please allow us to express the view that the success of the Ocean Conference will ultimately be judged on its ability to catalyze partnerships. To succeed on this account, the full and robust participation of civil society, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, academia and other stakeholders in all aspects of this conference and its preparatory process will be absolutely critical. We really can't stress this point enough.

We look forward to working with this full array of stakeholders, along with our fellow Member States, to develop partnerships on the themes of the Ocean Conference.