

**Statement by Ambassador Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to  
the United Nations at the Oceans Conference**

**June 7, 2017**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Representatives,**

Let me start by congratulating Fiji and Sweden for co-hosting this landmark Conference. We also commend the leadership shown by the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Portugal and Singapore in their capacity as co-facilitators during the negotiations for the Call for Action document.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Ecuador on behalf of G77 and China.

**Mr. President,**

The Ocean is the collective heritage of mankind. It sustains life by providing water and oxygen, food security, sustenance, protection from natural disasters and countless other benefits. Our connection with it is as old as time: indeed without the Ocean, mankind's remarkable journey of discovery and progress would not have been possible.

This vital resource, however, is in grave and unprecedented danger. Decades of unrestrained and irresponsible human activity have led to the deterioration in the health of the Ocean. Marine pollution, acidification and excessive exploitation of natural resources have done serious harm to the waters that are our lifeblood.

The world needs to come together to make a collective commitment to reverse this

It is encouraging to see the level of interest this conference has engendered over the last week. By bringing together the political leadership, scientific community, innovators, activists, policymakers and other stakeholders, the Oceans Conference has reinvigorated our collective resolve to achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14, the goal of the Oceans. It has

also highlighted the importance of sustained action over the long term to address many issues related to the health and well-being of the Ocean, which is integral to the health and future of our planet.

**Mr. President,**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an overarching and viable framework for national, regional and global development. The goals set out in this framework are integrated, indivisible and universal. It is imperative that all dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – are pursued in a balanced and integrated manner. This shared understanding of the nature of the 2030 Agenda for Development must underpin our efforts to successfully implement SDG 14. Only such an integrated and balanced approach will ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the Ocean.

It is also imperative that our agreements are embedded in the understanding that there are wide economic and development disparities among states. Without acknowledging that the international community has common but differentiated responsibilities tangible progress will remain elusive.

The fact that the health of the Ocean is closely linked with the problem of climate change adds an important dimension to this challenge. As a primary regulator of the global climate and an effective carbon sink, the Ocean holds the key to all future solutions to combat climate change. Effective implementation of the Paris Agreement is crucial in this regard. Climate change is truly a global problem. It does not discriminate between countries. None of us can afford the luxury of opting out of efforts to combat this problem. Those who seek to opt out will do it at their own nation's peril.

**Ladies and gentlemen**

Pakistan is among the countries that will be most grievously affected by the sharp decline in the health of the Ocean. Pakistan is one of the key littoral states of the Arabian Sea, which is one of the major biological productivity zones among the world's oceans. Recent erratic trends in the annual monsoons, climatic variability and unpredictability, compounded by the changes resulting

in the natural environment are having an adverse impact on biological productivity, as well as biological diversity of the area.

To address the challenge the Government of Pakistan is undertaking a number of steps to strengthen our national capacity to undertake Marine Scientific Research. This will significantly contribute to increasing our oceanographic knowledge in order to improve ocean health and biodiversity, and also to enhance productivity and food security provided by the Ocean.

We remain committed to working closely with the international community to improve the health of our oceans. Pakistan will continue to play an active role in all efforts that are aimed to ensure the conservation of our oceans so that we leave a better and more sustainable planet in the decades to come. This is not only our solemn responsibility to future generations but we owe this to our planet, for which the ocean is its most vital life support.

Thank you.