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The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

Statement by

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Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture

**High-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the
oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

Partnership Dialogue 7:

**Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their
resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United
Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

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Distinguished Co-chairs, Mr. Moderator, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Oceans are of fundamental importance to all States. Without a clean, healthy, productive ocean, Agenda 2030 will be almost impossible to attain. Sustainable management of natural resources is key to our aims of eradicating poverty and hunger, ensuring healthy lives and promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Iceland has direct experience of the power and potential of the ocean. Iceland's longstanding approach is carefully balancing the sustainable use and the conservation of oceans and their resources.

In our experience this responsibility is best placed in the hands of those living closest to the resources, directly affected by the decisions taken and with the greatest interests at stake. At the same time we realize that international cooperation is essential to keep our oceans clean and marine environment healthy.

Co-chairs,

The effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing agreements will have a critical impact on progress in all the target areas of SDG 14 and interrelated Goals.

It is Iceland's firm position that UNCLOS provides the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas. The management of high seas fisheries through a regional approach, in line with the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, has proven a firm basis for sustainable management. The development of the third Implementing Agreement under UNCLOS, the so-called BBNJ-instrument, might make the framework even more comprehensive in the near future.

Co-chairs,

We shouldn't try to reinvent the wheel in the international context. We already have the legal framework for the achievement of SDG 14 - as long as States meet their obligations and work together.

With strict management systems and effective enforcement we can ensure that future generations continue to harvest food from the sea. Key to this is a strong scientific basis and the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Effective compliance with, and enforcement of, the key legal instruments remain a challenge. This is particularly true for developing countries and especially for SIDS and LDCs. Increased knowledge-sharing and capacity-building is thus of utmost importance.

Iceland is honoured to contribute to such capacity building through the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme in Iceland. We will continue to play our part in strengthening the implementation of UNCLOS as the cornerstone of successful implementation of SDG 14.

Thank you.