



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

10 March 2017

Excellency,

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/303 on the modalities for the 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, I have the honour to enclose herewith, the letter of the co-facilitators of the preparatory process, H.E. Mr. Álvaro Mendonça e Moura, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. Burhan Gafoor, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations, attaching the 'zero draft' of the Call for Action. The first round of consultations on the draft will be from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 in Conference Room 2.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Thomson'.

Peter Thomson

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



New York, 9 March 2017

Excellency,

We are pleased to write to you in our capacity as co-facilitators appointed by the President of the General Assembly to oversee the preparatory process and to conclude the intergovernmental consultations on a “Call for Action” for the 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.

In our letter dated 21 February 2017, we had stated our intention to make the “zero draft” of the “Call for Action” available by early March 2017, in accordance with the requirements of resolution 70/303. Accordingly, the zero draft is enclosed.

In accordance with resolution 70/303, we have prepared the zero draft taking into account deliberations of the preparatory meeting that took place on 15 and 16 February 2017 and other inputs. We thank all delegations and stakeholders for their constructive participation and concrete contribution.

As we explained at our last preparatory meeting, the “zero draft” will be the starting point for our next consultations and we look forward to hearing your views and suggestions.

We wish to remind delegations that the next round of consultations will be held from Monday, 20 March 2017 through Wednesday, 22 March 2017. The meetings will take place in Conference Room 2 at the following timings:

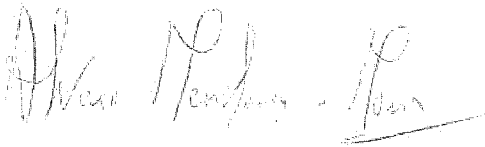
Monday, 20 March 2017  
10:00am to 1:00pm and 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Tuesday, 21 March 2017  
10:00am to 1:00pm and 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Wednesday, 22 March 2017  
3:00pm to 6:00pm

As co-facilitators, we remain committed to working in an open, inclusive manner with all delegations and stakeholders in order to produce a meaningful outcome document. We look forward your active and constructive participation in the intergovernmental consultations, so that we can adopt by consensus a concise and focused declaration to support the implementation of Goal 14.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Alvaro Mendonca Moura  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of Portugal to the United Nations



Burhan Gafoor  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of Singapore to the United Nations

## **OUR OCEANS, OUR FUTURE: CALL FOR ACTION**

1. We, the representatives of our people, meeting at The Ocean Conference, affirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our oceans for the future of our people and our planet.
2. We are determined to act with a sense of urgency, recognising that the well-being of present and future generations is inextricably linked to the health and productivity of our oceans. Oceans cover three quarters of our planet and contribute to sustainable development and sustainable ocean-based economies, including poverty eradication, food security and nutrition, livelihoods and decent work. They supply half the oxygen we breathe and absorb a third of the carbon dioxide we produce. We need to act decisively to address the adverse impacts that threaten to impair the role of the oceans as climate regulator, carbon sink, and source of marine biodiversity.
3. We underline the integrated and indivisible character of all Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda and reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, with the full participation of all relevant stakeholders.
4. We stress the need for an integrated, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach as well as cooperation and coordination at the national, regional and global levels. We must respond to the complex nature of the challenges facing our oceans by further increasing marine scientific knowledge that can inform decision-making, as well as enhancing the sharing of scientific data and best practices.
5. We emphasise the critical importance of partnerships enabling collective action at all levels, with stakeholders working closely to reverse the decline in the health of our oceans and to restore its resilience. Our efforts to implement the targets under Goal 14 should take into consideration the different timelines of the targets, while emphasising the interlinkages between them.
6. We agree that measures to implement Goal 14 should build upon, and not duplicate or undermine, existing legal instruments, processes or entities. We affirm the need to be consistent with international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for all the activities in the oceans and seas.
7. We recognise that the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources requires enhanced capacity building and the transfer of relevant technology for developing countries, especially to countries in special situations, in particular SIDS and LDCs.
8. We call on all stakeholders to work in concert to take the following actions on an urgent basis, including by building on existing institutions and partnerships:
  - (a) Approach the implementation of Goal 14 in an integrated way and promote policies that take into account the critical interlinkages among the targets of Goal 14 as well as the potential synergies between Goal 14 and the other goals.
  - (b) Enhance the involvement of all stakeholders, including local communities, indigenous peoples, women and youth, to promote national ownership and success in the implementation of Goal 14.
  - (c) Promote multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, by enhancing engagement of governments with the scientific community, the private sector, philanthropic organisations, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, and other relevant actors.

- (d) Integrate Goal 14 into national development plans and strategies, and strengthen policy coherence and coordination amongst institutions at the national, regional and global levels to support its implementation.
- (e) Develop comprehensive strategies to raise awareness of the state of the oceans, including the impacts of anthropogenic activities on the oceans, and support plans to foster education regarding ocean sustainability issues, including as part of school curricula, to promote ocean literacy and a culture of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of our oceans.
- (f) Invest greater resources in marine scientific research in order to enhance knowledge of the oceans, promote decision-making based on the best available science, and support initiatives to promote coherence, integration, and cost-effectiveness with the aim of increasing and sharing such knowledge.
- (g) Accelerate action to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris, nutrient pollution, wastewater, solid waste discharges, plastics and microplastics.
- (h) Develop sustainable consumption and production patterns and adopt the 3Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle – including through incentivising market-based solutions to reduce waste, improving mechanisms for environmentally-sound waste management, disposal and recycling, and developing alternatives such as reusable or biodegradable products.
- (i) Implement long-term strategies to reduce the use of plastics, with the aim of phasing out plastic bags, single use plastics and the use of primary microplastic particles in products, including by developing arrangements at relevant levels to regulate their use.
- (j) Strengthen the use of appropriate area-based management tools, namely marine protected areas and other integrated, cross-sectoral approaches including marine spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, based on best available science and promoting an ecosystem-based approach.
- (k) Support the development of scientific research and enhance cooperation in scientific research and the sharing of data to better understand the relationship between climate and the health and productivity of the oceans.
- (l) Develop effective adaptation and mitigation measures to build resilience to ocean acidification and harmful impacts of climate change on the oceans as well as on coastal ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs, and ensure the implementation of the relevant obligations and commitments.
- (m) Enhance sustainable fisheries management including through the implementation of science-based management measures.
- (n) End IUU fishing and destructive fishing practices, addressing their root causes and holding actors accountable, so as to deprive them of benefits of such activities, and effectively implement flag State and port State obligations.
- (o) Accelerate further work and compatibility of efforts on the development of systems for full traceability of fish products, strengthen cooperation and coordination such as through RFMO/As where appropriate, and provide effective capacity-building and technical assistance to this end.
- (p) Strengthen capacity building and technical assistance provided to fishers, in particular small scale and artisanal fishers in developing countries, especially SIDS and LDCs, including through the work of relevant international organisations, in the implementation of policies that promote business activity without increasing pressure on fisheries, and provide access to fisheries and partnerships focusing on capacity-building and technical assistance.

(q) Complete, without further delay, the ongoing negotiations in the World Trade Organization to strengthen disciplines on subsidies in the fisheries sector, including through the prohibition of certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies.

(r) Support the promotion and strengthening of oceans-based economies, which inter alia build on fisheries, tourism, aquaculture, renewable energies, marine biotechnology, as means to achieve the three dimensions of sustainable development, in particular for SIDS and LDCs.

(s) Step up efforts under relevant international financial institutions and the donor community to provide financial support, technical assistance, and capacity building, especially to countries in special situations, in particular SIDS and LDCs, for the development of sustainable oceans-related activities and the implementation of Goal 14, including through use of innovative financing mechanisms, such as blue bonds and debt-for-nature swaps.

(t) Step up engagement in discussions and the exchange of views on the development of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, so that the General Assembly can, before the end of its seventy-second session, decide on the convening and on the starting date of an intergovernmental conference.

(u) Contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda by submitting the results from The Ocean Conference as an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

(v) Consider further means and initiatives to support the timely and effective implementation of Goal 14.

9. We welcome the partnership dialogues and the voluntary commitments made in the context of The Ocean Conference and, recognising the importance of following-up on them, commit to support their implementation.

10. We call upon the UN Secretary-General to support the implementation of the actions pledged in this document, including by enhancing coordination and coherence among UN agencies and other relevant entities dealing with the issue of oceans, seas and marine resources.

11. We are mobilised by a strong conviction that our oceans are critical to our shared future and common humanity in all its diversity. As responsible stakeholders, we are determined to act decisively, convinced that our collective action will make a difference to our people, to our planet, and to our prosperity.

\* \* \*