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European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	UN 2020 Ocean Conference - EU and its MS' position on the zero draft declaration

Delegations will find attached the European Union and its Member States' position on the zero draft declaration, with the view to the preparation of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference.

The European Union and its Member States' position on the zero draft declaration

Our ocean, our future, our responsibility

1. We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives meeting in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June 2020 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”, with the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, reaffirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our oceans, seas and marine resources. Significantly greater ambition is required at all levels to address the dire state of the ocean. Recognising our responsibility as stewards of oceans and seas for current and future generations, we, as leaders and representatives of our Governments, are determined to act decisively and urgently to improve the state, health, productivity and resilience of the ocean, in order to ensure the achievement of the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. We reaffirm our commitments to act made in the declaration, entitled “Our ocean, our future: ‘call for action’” adopted by the 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, held from 5 to 9 June 2017.
3. We recognize that the ocean is fundamental to life on our planet and our future. The ocean is an important source of our planet's biodiversity, plays a vital role in the climate system and in the carbon and water cycles and provides a wide range of ecosystem services. The ocean supplies us with oxygen to breathe, absorbs over a quarter of the total carbon dioxide we produce, contributes to food security, decent jobs and livelihoods, and poverty eradication. A clean, safe, healthy, productive and resilient ocean is essential for sustainable development and the development of a sustainable ocean-based economy.
4. We underline the interlinkages and synergies between Goal 14, its targets and the other Goals of the 2030 Agenda, which is integrated and indivisible in its nature.

5. We are therefore deeply alarmed by the global emergency facing the ocean. Sea levels are rising, the ocean is warmer and more acidic, marine species, including migratory species, are on strong decline, habitats and ecosystems are degraded and, as a result, oceans are becoming less productive. Pollution, including plastic pollution, continues to enter the ocean at an alarming rate, there are increasing pressures on biodiversity from invasive alien species, a third of fish stocks are now overexploited, and half of all living coral has been lost.
6. While progress has been made towards the achievement of some targets of Goal 14, action is not advancing at the speed or scale required to meet our goals and in particular, we are seriously concerned with the lack of success in achieving the four targets under Goal 14 that mature this year. We commit to identify the obstacles which are hampering the achievement of these targets. We reiterate our commitment to achieving them without undue delay and our determination to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources through the application of the ecosystem approach and precautionary principle.
7. We reaffirm that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and are alarmed by the adverse effects of climate change and carbon dioxide emissions on the ocean, including the rise in ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, deoxygenation, the decrease in polar ice coverage, sea level rise, shifts in fish distribution and decrease in fish stocks, coastal erosion and extreme weather events, as established by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its special report entitled *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*. We emphasize that mitigation of and adaptation to climate change represent an immediate and urgent priority to ensuring the health of the ocean, human safety and thus our future.
8. We are alarmed by the findings about cumulative human impacts on the ocean, including ecosystem degradation, species extinctions as established by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services *Global Assessment Report*, as well as its stress on the need for transformative change. We are committed to halt and reverse the decline in the state, health and productivity of the ocean's ecosystems and biodiversity, and to protect, restore and enhance its resilience and ecological integrity in a changing climate.

9. We reaffirm that the Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.
10. We recognize the importance of the work undertaken by the intergovernmental conference to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.
11. We acknowledge the work on oceans and seas done under auspices of the United Nations Environmental Assembly in relation to pollution, including marine litter and microplastics, biodiversity conservation, anthropogenic ocean noise, sustainable consumption and production, single use plastics and environmentally sound waste and water management.
12. We welcome the ongoing work under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to develop a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, to be adopted at its COP 15, and invite the CBD Secretariat to consider the relevant outcomes of this Conference in the process of finalization of the said framework.
13. We also recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and its vision aimed at achieving the science we need for the ocean we want. We support the Decade's mission to generate and use knowledge for the transformational action needed to achieve a clean, healthy, safe, predictable, resilient, sustainably harvested and productive ocean for sustainable development by 2030 and beyond. We fully support the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in preparing and implementing the Decade and commit to supporting these efforts.
14. We stress that science and innovative actions can provide the solutions necessary to support informed decision/policy making and implementation to scale up action to overcome challenges in achieving Goals 14 in the following ways:

- 14a. Informing integrated ocean management, planning and decision-making, through improving our understanding of the state of the marine environment, basic ocean processes, functioning and interlinkages, as well as of the cumulative impacts of different stressors and of human activities on the ocean and on human health and food safety, and anticipating the impacts of planned activities so that their negative effects can be avoided or minimized,
- 14b. Restoring fish stocks to levels that produce maximum sustainable yield targets, including by combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, addressing destructive fishing practices and minimizing overfishing, waste, by-catch and discards, through the use of appropriate management measures, communication tools and other technological tools for monitoring, control and surveillance and tracking such as through the use of satellite technology, as well as development of fishing gears with better selectivity and low impact on the marine ecosystem,
- 14c. Reducing all forms of marine pollution from land and sea-based sources, including marine litter, especially plastic litter and microplastics, and nutrient pollution, chemicals contaminants including pharmaceuticals, anthropogenic underwater noise, invasive alien species, and tackling land-sea interactions,
- 14d. Adopting comprehensive life-cycle approaches, especially for the reduction of plastic waste, at the global level through, *inter alia*, sustainable consumption and production and improved environmentally sound waste management, and developing alternatives such as reusable and recyclable products or new, biodegradable materials under natural conditions,
- 14e. Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools with appropriate management plans, including increased use of tools such as marine protected areas, integrated coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning, through assessing their ecological value connectivity and representativeness and contribution to a clean, healthy, productive and resilient ocean,

- 14f. Developing and implementing measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including by reducing greenhouse gas emissions inter alia from shipping and through increasing the use of renewable energy technologies, such as ocean-based technologies, the designation of emission control areas through the IMO and implementing nature-based solutions with safeguards for carbon sequestration, preventing coastal erosion and preparing for ocean-related extreme weather events.
15. We commit to taking the following actions on an urgent basis to accelerate the implementation of SDG14, recognizing that many countries, particularly developing countries, and in particular small island developing states and least developed countries, face capacity challenges that need to be addressed:
- 15a. Strengthen data collection and management efforts, including through ocean observation networks at the national, regional and global levels, including environmental and socio-economic data, to support data-based assessments and improve the timely sharing and dissemination of such data and knowledge, including by applying the FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) data principles, investing in national statistical systems, standardizing and ensuring comparability and data, ensuring interoperability between databases, and ensuring that knowledge is presented and synthesized in a manner which is useful for policy- and decision-makers,
- 15b. Increase cooperation at the global, regional and sub-regional levels in order to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices including with regard to science and innovation to support the acceleration of the implementation of SDG14 and related ocean targets at the appropriate levels, and recognizing in this regard, the importance of regional cooperation, in particular through Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes and Regional fisheries management organisations, as well as through cross-sectoral processes,

- 15c. Strengthen the science-policy interface for implementing Goal 14 and its targets as well as related Goals and targets, to ensure that policy is informed by the best-available science, and that conversely science is informed of the requirements of policy makers, to ensure that policies are updated and adapted in line with developing knowledge and emerging challenges, and to highlight policies and actions that may be scalable and replicable, including through processes and assessments both at regional level, such as the regional marine quality status assessments, and at global level including IPBES, IPCC and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects,
- 15d. Enhance international cooperation to support developing countries in addressing their constraints in access to information/knowledge and technology, including through strengthening science, technology and innovation infrastructure, domestic innovation capabilities, absorptive capacities and the capacity of national statistical systems, in particular in the most vulnerable countries, which face the greatest challenges in collecting, analysing and using reliable data and statistics,
- 15e. Establish effective partnerships, including multi-stakeholder, public-private, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary partnerships, including by incentivizing the sharing of good practices, giving visibility to well-performing partnerships and creating space for meaningful interaction and networking,
- 15f. Explore, develop and promote innovative financing solutions for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies, including through public-private sector partnerships and capital market instruments, and providing technical assistance to enhance the bankability and feasibility of projects,
- 15g. Recognize the important complementary role of traditional knowledge held by indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the role of social science in planning, decision making and implementation,

- 15h. Empower women, as they play a critical role in progressing towards a sustainable ocean-based economy and are key to achieving Goal 14, and mainstream a gender perspective in our work to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and its resources,
- 15i. Ensure that children, youth and adults are empowered with relevant knowledge and skills that enable them to understand the importance of the health of the oceans and the need to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resource for sustainable development through promoting and supporting ocean literacy through quality education and life-long learning.
16. We welcome follow-up on the partnership dialogues, and commit to implementing our respective voluntary commitments made in the context of the Conference and urge those who have made voluntary commitments at the 2017 Conference to provide updates on their progress and in this regard we encourage appropriate follow-up and review to assess their contribution to the achievement of the SDG14 targets.
17. We strongly call upon the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support the implementation of Goal 14 in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by enhancing inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, taking into consideration the work of UN-Oceans.
18. We acknowledge that a clean, healthy, productive and resilient ocean is critical for our planet, our lives and our future. We know the ocean we want. We call upon all stakeholders to take ambitious and concerted action to accelerate implementation to achieve Goal 14 without undue delay.
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