


Preparatory Meeting, February 4 AM

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I call to order the first meeting of the preparatory meeting for the 22nd 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 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/292. 

Ambassador Martin Villie Oermann of Denmark and I, 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 brief, concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally agreed declaration, would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence at the podium of

the President of the General Assembly

the Minister of Sea of Portugal

ready to raise our sails, check the wind and set our course towards the sustainable ocean that we need.

I now give the floor to my fellow Facilitator! Ambassador Oermann of Denmark

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Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is great to see so many of you here today. Ambassador Lai and I have very much been looking forward to this meeting, which is the first chance for us to hear from all of you.

The Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June will be of critical importance. As has been made clear by the Secretary-General's background note, our oceans are facing a global emergency. Sea levels are rising, plastic pollution is increasing, the ocean is warmer and more acidic, fish stocks are overexploited and half of all living coral has been lost.

Oceans, seas and marine resources are critical to sustainable development, including sustainable ocean-based economies and to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole. They underpin poverty eradication and food security and support the well-being of humans and planet.

As the Secretary-General reminded us in his background note, oceans are inextricably linked with climate change, regulating the global climate by acting as a giant sink for greenhouse gases. Ocean warming and

deoxygenation, sea-level rise and ocean acidification are increasingly adversely affecting the oceans and their resources.

We need greater urgency and greater ambition at all levels if we are to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14. We need more truly innovative, entrepreneurial and science-based approaches to ocean and coastal restoration and protection. It is our sincere hope that all Member States have come prepared to this meeting with concrete and ambitious ideas that will bring us closer to our common goal of achieving SDG 14.

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At the 2017 Ocean Conference, we adopted the declaration on our ocean, our future (call for action) which showcased to the world our strong commitment to implementation of SDG 14. The conference has significantly raised global awareness of the problems facing the oceans and seas and catalyzed nearly 140 voluntary commitments, the number of which is still growing today.

Since the 2017 Ocean Conference, various actions have been undertaken at all levels in support of the implementation of SDG 14. However, progress is uneven among countries and regions depending on availability of science and innovation, capacity-building and financing as well as the level of intersectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation. Inadequate data collection and disaggregation remain a huge barrier to implementation of most targets of SDG 14.

Science and innovation are essential tools of addressing the challenges to SDG 14 and to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda, hence the theme

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I thank the Minister of Sea of Portugal for his statement.

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I now give the floor to Prof. Micheni >. "tiba, Principal Secretary for Fisheries, Aquaculture and the Blue Economy, Republic of Senegal to deliver a statement.

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I thank the Principal Secretary of Senegal for his, her statement

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I now give the floor to Mr. Stephen Mathias, Assist

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Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

We shall now turn to our discussion on the themes for the interactive

representatives being delivering their statements, the countdown clock on the screen will begin. If representatives go more than 30 seconds over time they will be given a warning and after 1 minute past the time limit they will turn off the microphone. I assure you that this is not because we do not want to listen to you, but because we want to listen to all of you.

Representatives with longer statements or interventions are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and to submit their full-length statements to the Secretariat for posting on the Conference website.

Participants are kindly requested to press the button on the console before them in order to request for the floor.

In accordance with the modalities resolution, apart from States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, other participants will be given the opportunity to speak as well at appropriate junctures during the meeting.

I also want to highlight that Ambassador Lai and I held a webinar with stakeholders last week to brief them on our proposed approach to these consultations. In addition to opportunities at this meeting, we invite input from all stakeholders in response to the background note on science and innovation in support of Goal 14. This will include an e2 consultation process and a further webinar in March, and further details on these modalities will be circulated separately.

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