

Dear Chairs

Australia wishes to take the opportunity to thank you for circulating the zero draft of the political declaration for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference. We view the overall substance and framing of this draft very positively, and we express strong support for your ongoing work. We are particularly pleased to see strong references to the sustainable ocean economy narrative of protection/production/prosperity in the declaration.

We wish to contribute the following additional comments:

- 1) Australia supports the intention for the text to reflect our determination to act decisively and urgently to improve the health and productivity of the ocean. For maximum impact and longevity, it is critical that this declaration enjoy broad based consensus by approaching contentious concepts using agreed language, for example the language used in the 2019 resolution on oceans and the law of the sea (A/Res/74/19).
- 2) In paragraph 4, we propose to add additional context to support the need for action and innovation:

Sea levels are rising, the ocean is warmer and more acidic. Plastic pollution continues to enter the ocean at a **concerning** ~~alarming~~ rate, a third of fish stocks are now overexploited, and half of all living coral has been lost. **These threats are increasing.**

- 3)

The rationale is that otherwise it reads that we are alarmed/deeply concerned about the need for transformative change.

- 6) @
information on how to address nutrient pollution; waste management and alternatives alone

Reducing marine pollution, including marine plastic litter and nutrient pollution, contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches that include improved waste management, **phasing out problematic and unnecessary plastics** and developing new, biodegradable materials that can reduce additional marine plastic litter,

- 7) In 10.d, we would propose amendments to emphasise an unbiased approach to ABM that recognises the importance of different tools, as follows:

Effectively planning and implementing area-based management tools, **such as including** marine protected areas, through assessing their ecological value, ~~and~~ contribution to a healthy ocean **and appropriateness to local circumstances**

- 8) We support the intent of the text of p11.e. but also suggest the