

Statement by the Republic of Korea

Informal Consultations on the zero-draft declaration of the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference

March 2020

Thank you, Madam and Mr. Co-facilitators.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the opportunity to discuss the zero draft prepared by you in the preparatory process for the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference. We would like to thank you for laying the groundwork for a brief, concise, action-oriented and inter-governmentally agreed declaration that highlights science-based and innovative areas of action to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

The zero draft seems to contain most elements that were emphasized by many delegations and other stakeholders during the Preparatory Meeting. While expressing our general support for the zero draft, my delegation would like to suggest a few modifications that might help achieve our goals. In our comments, we focus on 1) climate and ocean interlinkages, 2) cooperative science-based solutions to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and 3) the agreements we reached in 2017 regarding actions against marine pollution.

The Republic of Korea suggests the following changes to the zero draft text:

- 6. We welcome that COP25 highlighted the ocean as an integrated part of the Earth's climate system and stress the need to continue our efforts to ensure the integrity of ocean and coastal ecosystems in the context of climate change towards COP26.
[New text]***

We would like to propose this new paragraph to note what was discussed about the interlinkage between ocean and climate at COP25, and to emphasize the importance of cooperation amongst Member States and other stakeholders.

- 10. We stress that science-based and innovative actions can provide the solutions necessary to overcome challenges in achieving Goal 14 in the following ways:***

- b. *Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and minimizing ~~waste~~, by-catch and discards, in order to restore fish stocks to levels that produce maximum sustainable yield targets, through the use of ~~communication tools and other technological tools for monitoring and tracking~~ monitoring, control and surveillance network,*

We would like to suggest deleting or moving “waste” to para 10 c because it is much less appropriate for it to be mentioned together with by-catch and discards here in the context of combatting IUU;

We would like to propose replacing “communication tools and other technological tools for monitoring and tracking” with “monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) network.” An effective fight against IUU fishing cannot be waged through a single government’s efforts but requires international collaboration, including the exchange of relevant information. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the use of the MCS “network” rather than the simple reference to the use of technological "tools" for communication, monitoring and tracking in and of themselves.

- c. *Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including hazardous substances, marine plastic litter and nutrient pollution, contributing to comprehensive life-cycle approaches that include improved waste management and developing new, biodegradable materials that can reduce additional marine plastic litter,*

Both SDG 14 target 1 and the 2017 Call for Action used the wording “prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities”. We would like to propose to keep it as it was agreed in this paragraph.

Finally, we would like to add “hazardous substances” to reflect the agreed language in the Call for Action, which enumerated marine debris, plastics and microplastics, nutrient pollution, untreated wastewater, solid waste discharges and hazardous substances as examples of marine pollution, particularly from land-based activities. Besides marine plastic litter and nutrient pollution, we need to cover in this paragraph the substances which are hazardous on their own and liquid or solid waste with the potential to be hazardous when improperly treated. We believe that such hazardous substances pose a direct and significant threat to human health as well as marine environment, and are subject to proper treatment and disposal pursuant to domestic and international laws.

We stand ready to constructively engage through further consultations. Thank you.

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