



नेपाल NEPAL

Statement by His Excellency Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, at the preparatory meeting on “themes” for the High-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

New York, 15 February 2017

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Distinguished co-facilitators (*Ambassador/PR Alvaro e Moura of Portugal and Ambassador/PR Burhan Gafoor of Singapore*):

First of all, I wish to thank and commend the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Peter Thomson, for his determination and commitment to convene the United Nations Oceans Conference come June, to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, with the overall theme of “Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of SDG 14”, and for all his support in the run up to that Conference.

Together, I compliment the distinguished Co-Facilitators for taking up the responsibility of overseeing the preparatory process and concluding the intergovernmental consultations on an outcome document in the form of “Call for Action” to support the implementation of SDG 14 in time. My delegation has full confidence in your able leadership in steering the preparatory process, starting with this two-day meeting, as well as the Conference itself to a successful conclusion, and pledges its full support in your important work ahead.

Our appreciation also goes to the governments of Fiji and Sweden for their forthcoming hosting of the High-Level Conference here in New York.

I align my statement with those of the Group of 77 and China, LDCs and LLDCs and wish to add one specific point regarding the themes for partnership dialogues in the Oceans Conference.

Much was said by the distinguished speakers at the opening session this morning on the ills of oceans and what needs to be done to heal them. Above all, I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive background note recommending seven themes for the partnership dialogues. The seven themes encompass all 10 Targets under Goal 14 including marine pollution, ocean acidification, capacity building, technology transfer, financing, preserving coastal ecosystem and implementing international law as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), among others. I appreciate Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo (Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) for introducing the note, and Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Mr. Stephen Mathias (Office of the Legal Affairs) for his valuable reminders on

the inter-linkages among Goals and Targets, as well as on what needed to be done from legal and normative points of view.

As a party to UNCLOS, and as a Himalayan landlocked and least developed country, Nepal attaches great significance to the oceans and seas. Oceans are treasures for nutrition and food security and help in poverty eradication, marine ecosystem protection and international trade, among its countless other virtues.

Nepal recognizes that Oceans and Himalayas have their own ecosystems and that they are also part and partial of the bigger ecosystem. That reality has been acutely established and manifested by the climate change in terms of the rising global temperature and changing weather systems and patterns around the world. While it is all too important to address the difficulties related to their distinct ecosystems, it will be far from being sustainable if we do not address the bigger ecosystem brought forth by their inter-connectedness and inter-dependence.

Nepal has been emphasizing all along that we need to be fully aware of and acknowledge the organic linkages that exist between the oceans and the huge columns of water in the form of Himalayas, often referred to as the Third Pole.

The linkage is not limited to the massive melting of ice of the Himalayas and Himalayan glaciers and the rise in the level of the seas alone. In South Asia, for example, we feel it first hand-melting of ice up in the Himalayas has a direct bearing on the plights of the Maldives and Bangladesh and other coastal countries. This is apart from the recurrent floods, droughts, land degradation and land desertification, all adversely affecting the lives and livelihoods of the millions of people. Over and above all that, the changing Monsoon pattern due to climate change is and will be alarmingly affecting many more countries around.

Therefore, these issues need to be addressed with a package of enlightened solutions for the sustainable health of the oceans.

In this connection, I wish to recall here the two Goal-14 targets in particular, Targets 14.2 and 14.5, which the Secretary-General has recommended to be addressed in the second theme he proposes, namely, 'Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems.

Nepal proposes that this theme be expanded a little to accommodate the above concern. The theme would then read: "Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine, coastal **and wider interconnected** ecosystems."

I wish to conclude by reiterating the solidarity of Nepal with the international community in the cause of the Oceans and the commitment to contribute to finding a sustainable solution of the ills of the oceans. Convinced that the healthy oceans and healthy mountains complement and reinforce each other, Nepal looks forward to working closely with you and all Member States ahead.

Thank you.