

### **United States Statement**

#### United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

- Distinguished Excellencies, Co-hosts, Esteemed Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- The United States is pleased to participate in this high level United Nations Ocean Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. The United States was closely involved in the development of SDG 14. We continue to view it as a necessary and useful framework for addressing issues relating to the ocean.
- We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, the Honorable Peter Thomson, for overseeing such an important gathering.
- We also would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Conference's co-hosts – Fiji and Sweden – for having the vision to bring us all together, and to the co-facilitators of the Call for Action – the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of Singapore and Portugal – who expertly led our work on that document over the past few months.
- We believe the success of this Conference rests on it being inclusive and transparent, with robust participation by all interested stakeholders.
- We therefore would like to acknowledge and thank all of the stakeholders participating this week. We are pleased to see so many experts from the public and private sectors, academia, the NGO community, philanthropies, and youth groups. The enormous challenge of protecting our ocean cannot be achieved without your engagement, and that of many others who could not be here this week.
- As we all know, the ocean and its resources play a vital role in global security and prosperity. But our ocean and its resources are under tremendous pressure from a variety of threats – including illegal fishing, marine pollution, and ocean acidification.
- The United States views this Conference as an important part of the overall global movement to address these threats and to promote the conservation and sustainable management of our ocean for this and future generations.

- Of particular importance this week are the Partnership Dialogues. By bringing together all stakeholders to share methods, scientific insight, technological advances, pilot programs, and case studies, these Dialogues will help us identify new approaches and innovative solutions.
- Such collaborative partnerships and global cooperation are critical to realizing progress, which we have seen first-hand in the areas of fisheries management and combating marine debris.
- In the United States, commercial fisheries generate over \$200 billion in sales and income and support 1.4 million jobs. Worldwide, fisheries and aquaculture generate \$148 billion in trade revenue, and support the livelihood of about 12 percent of the world's population.
- However, illegal, unreported, and unregulated – or IUU – fishing around the world is jeopardizing international food security and economic growth, and threatening marine ecosystems.
- The global value of IUU fishing is in the tens of billions each year. And illegal fisheries are often intertwined with drug trafficking, labor exploitation, environmental degradation, and organized crime.
- To combat IUU fishing, the United States has championed the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, which had its first meeting of the parties just last week.
- This agreement will help prevent illegal fishing from undermining valuable fisheries resources and help to level the playing field for legal fishers by keeping illegally harvested fish out of markets.
- In 2014, the United States launched the Our Ocean Conference series. In the past three years, these events have generated commitments valued at over \$9.2 billion to protect our ocean and to protect over 9.9 million square kilometers of ocean – an area the size of the United States. We look forward to participating in the next three Our Ocean events, beginning in Malta later this year.

- One outgrowth of the Our Ocean Conference is the Safe Ocean Network – a global network of governments, industry, and civil society that is strengthening the global fight against IUU fishing by enhancing coordination, information sharing, and capacity building to improve detection, enforcement, and prosecution of illegal fishing.
- We are hopeful that the Partnership Dialogue held this morning on sustainable fisheries, as well as the other six dialogues, will enhance global, collective efforts like these.
- In the United States, this is National Ocean Month, a chance for Americans to reflect on the value and importance of the ocean not only to our security and economy, but also as a source of recreation, enjoyment, and relaxation.
- We know everyone in this room understands these values, and the very real challenges that threaten them.
- Through our collective and continued commitment, we can identify and implement the concrete actions needed to protect our ocean, using SDG14 as our touchstone.
- Thank you.