

“The future we want” (Draft June 19)
Rio +20 UN Statement

Oceans and seas

158. We recognize that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth’s ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it and that international law, as reflected in United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), provides the legal framework for the conservation and the sustainable use of the oceans and their resources. We stress the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development, including through the contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security, creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change. We therefore commit to protect, and restore, the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity, enabling their conservation and sustainable use for present and future generations, and to effectively apply an ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach in the management, in accordance with international law, of activities impacting on the marine environment, to deliver on all three dimensions of sustainable development.

159. We recognize the importance of UNCLOS to advancing sustainable development and its near universal adoption by States, and in this regard we urge all its Parties to fully implement their obligations under the Convention.

160. We recognize the importance of building the capacity of developing countries to be able to benefit from the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and their resources and, in this regard, we emphasize the need for cooperation in marine scientific research to implement the provisions of UNCLOS and the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, as well as for the transfer of technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Guidelines for the transfer of marine technology.

161. We support the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including socio-economic aspects, established under the United Nations General Assembly, and look forward to the completion of its first global integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment by 2014 and its subsequent consideration by the General Assembly. We encourage consideration by States of assessment findings at appropriate levels.

162. We recognize the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. We note the ongoing work under the UN General Assembly of an Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. Building on the work of the ad hoc working group and before the end of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly we commit to address, on an urgent basis, the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction including by taking a decision on the development of an international instrument under UNCLOS.

163. We note with concern that the health of oceans and marine biodiversity are negatively affected by marine pollution, including marine debris, especially plastic, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, and nitrogen-based compounds, from a number of marine and land-based sources, including shipping and land runoff. We commit to take action to reduce the incidence and impacts of such pollution on marine ecosystems, including through the effective implementation of relevant conventions adopted in the framework of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the follow up of the relevant initiatives such as the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, as well as the adoption of coordinated strategies to this end. We further commit to take action by 2025, based on collected scientific data, to achieve significant reductions in marine debris to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment.

164. We note the significant threat alien invasive species pose to marine ecosystems and resources and commit to implement measures to prevent the introduction of, and manage the adverse environmental impacts of, alien invasive species including, as appropriate, those adopted in the framework of the IMO.

165. We note that sea level rise and coastal erosion are serious threats for many coastal regions and islands particularly in developing countries and, in this regard, we call on the international community to enhance its efforts to address these challenges.

166. We call for support to initiatives that address ocean acidification and the impacts of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems and resources. In this regard, we reiterate the need to work collectively to prevent further ocean acidification, as well as enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and of the communities whose livelihoods depend on them, and to support marine scientific research, monitoring and observation of ocean acidification and particularly vulnerable ecosystems, including through enhanced international cooperation in this regard.

167. We stress our concern about the potential environmental impacts of ocean fertilization. In this regard, we recall the decisions related to ocean fertilization adopted by the relevant intergovernmental bodies, and resolve to continue addressing with utmost caution ocean fertilization, consistent with the precautionary approach.

168. We commit to intensify our efforts to meet the 2015 target as agreed to in JPOI to maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield on an urgent basis. In this regard we further commit to urgently take the measures necessary to maintain or restore all stocks at least to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield, with the aim of achieving these goals in the shortest time feasible, as determined by their biological characteristics. To achieve this we commit to urgently develop and implement science based management plans, including by reducing or suspending fishing catch and effort commensurate with the status of the stock. We further commit to enhance action to manage bycatch, discards, and other adverse ecosystem impacts from fisheries including by eliminating destructive fishing practices. We also commit to enhance actions to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from significant adverse impacts including through the effective use of impact assessments. Such actions, including those through competent organizations, should be undertaken consistent with international law, the applicable international instruments and relevant General Assembly resolutions and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Guidelines.

169. We urge State Parties to the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of UNCLOS relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks to fully implement it, and give, in accordance with its Part VII, full recognition of the special requirements of developing States. Furthermore, we call upon all States to implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO International Plans of Action and technical guidelines.

170. We acknowledge that illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing deprive many countries of a crucial natural resource and remain a persistent threat to their sustainable development. We recommit to eliminate IUU fishing as advanced in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and to prevent and combat these practices including through the following: developing and implementing national and regional action plans in accordance with the FAO's international plan of action to combat IUU fishing; implementing—in accordance with international law—effective and coordinated measures by coastal States, flag States, port States and chartering nations and the States of nationality of the beneficial owners and others who support or engage in IUU fishing by identifying vessels engaged in IUU fishing and by depriving offenders of the benefits accruing from IUU fishing; as well as cooperating with developing countries to systematically identify needs and build capacity, including support for monitoring, control, surveillance, compliance and enforcement systems.

171. We call upon States that have signed the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing to expedite procedures for its ratification with a view to its early entry into force.

172. We recognize the need for transparency and accountability in fisheries management by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). We recognize the efforts already made by those RFMOs that have undertaken independent performance reviews, and call on all RFMOs to regularly undertake such reviews and make the results publicly available. We encourage implementation of the recommendations of such reviews and recommend that the comprehensiveness of those reviews be strengthened over time, as necessary.

173. We reaffirm our Johannesburg Plan of Implementation commitment to eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and overcapacity taking into account the importance of this sector to developing countries, and we reiterate our commitment to conclude multilateral disciplines on fisheries subsidies which give effect to the WTO Doha Development Agenda and the Hong Kong Ministerial mandates to strengthen disciplines on subsidies in the fisheries sector, including through the prohibition of certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and over-fishing, recognising that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiation, taking into account the importance of the sector to development priorities, poverty reduction, and livelihood and food security concerns. We encourage States to further improve the transparency and reporting of existing fisheries subsidies programmes through the WTO. Given the state of fisheries resources and without prejudicing the WTO Doha and Hong Kong Ministerial mandates on fisheries subsidies nor the need to conclude these negotiations, we encourage States to eliminate subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and over-fishing, and to refrain from introducing new such subsidies or from extending or enhancing existing such subsidies.

174. We urge the identification and mainstreaming of strategies by 2014 that further assist developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, in developing their national capacity to conserve, sustainably manage and realize the benefits of sustainable fisheries, including through improved market access for fish products from developing countries.

175. We commit to observe the need to ensure access to fisheries, and the importance of access to markets, by subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fishers and women fish workers, as well as indigenous peoples and their communities particularly in developing countries, especially small island developing States.

176. We also recognize the significant economic, social and environmental contributions of coral reefs, in particular to islands and other coastal States, as well as the significant vulnerability of coral reefs and mangroves to impacts including from climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, destructive fishing practices and pollution. We support international cooperation with a view to conserving coral reef and mangrove ecosystems and realizing their social, economic and environmental benefits as well as facilitating technical collaboration and voluntary information sharing.

177. We reaffirm the importance of area based conservation measures, including marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on best available scientific information as a tool for conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components. We note decision X/2 of the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, that by 2020, 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are to be conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.