

#LetsBeNice totheOcean

Annotated Draft - Third UN Ocean Conference Declaration - REV1

By the [Varda Group](#) on behalf of [Let's Be Nice to the Ocean](#),
including contributions from (in alphabetic order):

Antarctica and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), Aquatic Life Institute, ClientEarth, Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative (DOSI), Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), Global Fishing Watch, Go Insight, Greenpeace International, the High Seas Alliance (HSA), No Plastic in My Sea, Objectif Sciences International, the Ocean & Climate Platform, Ocean Vision Legal, OceanCare, Seas At Risk, Small Islands Organisation (SMILO), Surfrider Europe, Tetiaroa Society, Wildlife Justice Commission and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

6 March 2025

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Foreword

On 13 December 2024, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) released a [zero draft](#) of the Nice Ocean Action Plan, prepared under the responsibility of the Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives to the UN of Australia and Cape Verde, the two co-facilitators appointed by the UN General Assembly in July 2024. This zero draft triggered a broad variety of comments from both UN member States and civil society organisations (CSOs). According to the [letter which accompanied the zero draft](#), the conversation is set to continue at least until 1 May 2025.

A Rev1 version, reflecting some significant but limited improvements, began circulating in February, although to the best of our knowledge **it has not been officially published by UNDESA**.

Pursuant to an online meeting organized by the [Let's Be Nice to the Ocean](#) initiative on 5 February 2025, where the representatives of some 45 of the [100 associated stakeholders](#) exchanged views on the original zero draft, **this document presents a compilation of contributions received by the Let's Be Nice to the Ocean coordinators from the following organisations:**

- [Antarctica and Southern Ocean Coalition \(ASOC\)](#)
- [Aquatic Life Institute](#)
- [ClientEarth](#)
- [Deep Ocean Stewardship Initiative](#)
- [Deep Sea Conservation Coalition](#)
- [Global Fishing Watch](#)
- [Go Insight](#)
- [Greenpeace International](#)
- [High Seas Alliance](#)
- [No Plastic in My Sea](#)
- [Objectif Sciences International](#)
- [The Ocean & Climate Platform](#)
- [Ocean Vision Legal](#)
- [OceanCare](#)
- [Seas At Risk](#)
- [Small Islands Organisation \(SMILO\)](#)
- [Surfrider Europe](#)
- [Tetiaroa Society](#)
- [Wildlife Justice Commission](#)
- [World Wildlife Fund \(WWF\)](#)

We have integrated these contributions, including those of [the Varda Group](#), into the REV1 version of February 2025. While the vast majority of these inputs were formulated pursuant to a reading of the early zero draft, they remain highly relevant to the evolving discussions. Given the collective nature of this compilation, some of the proposals align with similar views from different organisations. However, we have maintained them to ensure that delegations and stakeholders can fully consider the breath of perspectives. To enhance clarity, the contributions made in response to the original document are highlighted in the text.

This compilation reflects the depth of expertise, ambition and commitment of CSOs and other contributing organisations in shaping a strong and actionable Nice Ocean Action Declaration and Plan. Given the evolving nature of the text, we have done our best to adapt the language proposed by various stakeholders to align with the new REV1 version. Any inaccuracies or imprecisions are our sole responsibility.

What level of ambition can be expected in Nice is a legitimate question. The wider geopolitical state of play represents an additional challenge to come up with an ambitious Nice consensus that can represent a decisive step forward for the protection and restoration of the ocean.

Given the ocean's fundamental role in sustaining life on our planet and shaping our collective future, it is essential to uphold a high level of ambition in Nice to advance effective action for its protection, conservation, and sustainable use. We remain committed to promoting the [Protection Principle](#) — ensuring that ocean protection becomes the norm, not the exception. We encourage all States to work together and take concrete, collaborative steps toward meaningful ocean protection and restoration.

The ocean is our future and our shared responsibility.

The Nice Conference outcome can take several forms, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

- **Multilateral:** the Nice Ocean Action Declaration which needs to be strengthened, not the opposite, before Nice.
- **Plurilateral:** one or more groups of countries can join forces and agree in Nice to go beyond the multilateral lowest common denominator to increase their ambition.
- **Polylateral:** voluntary agreements and programmes committing together governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, philanthropy and/or private sector entities can also play an important role to raise ambition.

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6 March 2025

Our ocean, our future: accelerating action

- 1 We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives, meeting in Nice from 9 – 13 June 2025 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the full participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, reaffirm our strong commitment to **protect**, conserve and sustainably use our ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- 1bis We reaffirm the declaration entitled “Our ocean, our future, our responsibility”, adopted by the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, held, in Lisbon, from the 27th of June to the 1st of July of 2022, and the United Nations General Assembly’s resolution 76/296 of 21 July 2022, entitled “Our Ocean, our future, our responsibility”.
- 2 The ocean is fundamental to life on our planet and to our future. We share one ocean, and we remain gravely concerned with the global emergency it faces from the impacts of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Action is not advancing at the speed or scale required to meet SDG 14 and the 2030 Agenda. A healthy, productive and resilient ocean is essential for a sustainable ocean economy, food security, and climate stability, and underpins cultural and social connections to the ocean. We must act with urgency to face this challenge with bold, ambitious, human rights-based, just and transformative action, and ensure all people, including women and girls, persons with disabilities, youth, Indigenous Peoples, **small-scale artisanal fishers** and local communities, and peoples in vulnerable situations are fully, meaningfully empowered and included in ocean-related decision-making.

We emphasize that our actions to implement SDG 14 should be in line with, reinforce and not duplicate or undermine existing legal instruments, arrangements, processes, mechanisms or entities, **and should promote efforts in the right frameworks to advance ocean conservation, including in pristine areas such as the Southern Ocean.**
- 3 We affirm the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the **ocean** and **its** resources, as recognised in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want. We recognise the importance of UNCLOS to advancing sustainable development and its near universal adoption by States, as recalled

in paragraph 159 of The Future We Want, and in this regard, we urge all its parties to fully implement their obligations under UNCLOS. We acknowledge international jurisprudence through the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) where UNCLOS Art 192 obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment is understood as ‘protection’ of the marine environment from future damage and ‘preservation’ in the sense of maintaining or improving its present condition.’ We urge all UNCLOS parties to commit to establishing international guidelines and standards for the implementation of Part XII UNCLOS to protect and preserve the marine environment and enacting national legislation that ensures compliance with this obligation.

3bis We urge States to fulfil their obligations under all international treaties, conventions, agreements and resolutions, which contain provisions of critical importance to solving the ocean crisis, including, inter alia, the Climate Paris Agreement, decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and UNGA Sustainable Fisheries and Ocean Resolutions. We further urge all States to continue to work as parties to these agreements to promote ambitious decisions and resolutions aligned with the bold, just and transformative action called for in this Declaration.

4 We recall the Pact for the Future including our decision to take ambitious action to protect, conserve, sustainably use and restore the ocean and its ecosystems, and to improve its health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience by implementing and complying with multilateral agreements. in line with the BBNJ Agreement and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

5 We recognise the universal human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as formalised by the adoption of the resolution A/RES/76/300 by the United Nations General Assembly in 2022.

Protecting and conserving ocean ecosystems

6 We stress that a healthy ocean plays an essential role in mitigating the impacts of climate change, including through ocean-based adaptation and resilience. We are deeply concerned that the ability of the ocean and its ecosystems to act as a climate regulator and mitigator has been negatively affected by the destruction of marine ecosystems that play a fundamental role in storing carbon, the adverse impacts of climate change and anthropogenic gas emissions, including ocean warming, ocean acidification, compounded by marine pollution (including but not restricted to plastic pollution), biodiversity loss, high impact fishing practices, eutrophication and deoxygenation.

- 7 We underline the importance of the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus and **commit to** urgent, ambitious and enhanced global action to minimise the impact of climate change on the health of the ocean and its ecosystems as well as coastal communities, including those who rely on the ocean for their food and livelihoods. We stress the need for strengthened institutional linkages across various mandates and processes, such as the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to enhance global ambition and action for a climate-resilient ocean.
- 7bis We encourage all States to meet their obligations to reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Recalling our efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C as well as to conserve, protect and restore marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, We reaffirm our commitment to transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, **including through the prevention of fossil fuel exploration activities in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction, consistent with the objective agreed at UNFCCC COP28 as part of the First Global Stocktake: “[...] transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science”**.
- 8 We underscore the need for continued cooperation to address climate change-related sea level rise and its effects and welcome the ongoing process at the General Assembly to enhance action to address sea-level rise, including the convening of the High-Level Meeting on Sea Level Rise held in New York on 25 September 2024. We recognise sea level rise due to climate change disproportionately impacts Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and coastal communities in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and acknowledge the urgent need for greater international cooperation and collective action to enhance their adaptive capacities and build resilience while mitigating climate change. **Marginalised groups bear the brunt of many of the negative consequences of climate change and sea level rise as the High-Level Meeting on Sea Level Rise of September 2024 emphasized.** We are determined to strengthen the global response to support those who are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and sea level rise, **recognizing that local communities are on the frontline of these challenges. We call on Parties to support the Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience Coalition of Cities and Regions, fostering collective action to enhance resilience and safeguard coastal communities.**
- 8bis We affirm the importance of full and effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, as well as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its ocean-related targets and recognizes the role of conserving and sustainably using the ocean, seas and marine resources in achieving their objectives.
- 8ter We will ensure by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services,

are effectively protected, conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected, and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded ecosystems are allowed to regenerate and/or under effective restoration, and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of marine genetic resources, including digital sequence information, and associated traditional knowledge, and ensure the full integration of marine biodiversity and its multiple values, including intrinsic, relational and cultural values in addition to economic values in line with global targets under the KMGBF adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. These efforts should include the designation of areas (including all MPAs) where destructive fishing methods such as bottom trawling and dredging are not allowed and should integrate species-specific welfare considerations, ensuring that conservation strategies minimize harm to individual aquatic animals within these designated areas. Efforts must recognize and respect the integral role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including over traditional territories, where applicable, and in line with section C of the KMGBF, and should take account of the need to conserve and manage sustainably the most pristine parts of the planet, such as the Southern Ocean. We commit to ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced damage to and extinction of known threatened marine species and for the recovery and conservation of marine species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk.

- 9 We commend the leadership of SIDS in highlighting and addressing the challenges associated with sea level rise, and note in particular the Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons in the Face of Climate Change-Related Sea Level Rise, the 2021 Alliance of Small Island States Leaders' Declaration, and the 2024 Alliance of Small Island States Leaders Declaration on Sea Level Rise and Statehood.
- 10 We welcome the work of the International Law Commission (ILC) on the topic "Sea-level rise in relation to international law" and encourage States' continued engagement at the General Assembly on this topic to develop an international consensus on the legal responses to address this issue.
- 11 We acknowledge the 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on the Request for an Advisory Opinion submitted by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law. We urge all States to comply with the legal obligations to prevent, reduce and control the pollution of the marine environment from anthropogenic GHG emissions and to protect and preserve the marine environment from the negative impacts of climate change. This includes, amongst other obligations, reducing anthropogenic GHG emissions into the atmosphere, to be assessed objectively in line with the best available science, emissions pathways and other

considerations. Further we note the Tribunal's findings that what is required under UNCLOS to protect and preserve the marine environment from anthropogenic GHG may go beyond the international climate framework.

12 We remain deeply alarmed that the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic production, including micro- and nano-plastics, including in the marine environment, and its multiple negative impacts on the environment and ecosystems, human health, as well as on the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. We recognise the transboundary nature of plastic pollution and the urgency of addressing this global challenge, and thus reaffirm our commitment to preventing, reducing and eliminating plastic pollution through a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastics. In this regard, we underscore the importance of concluding the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) without further delay, in line with the mandate of UNEA resolution 5/14, and agreeing before UNEA7 on an ambitious international legally binding instrument based on a full-life cycle approach to phase down production of polymers with special attention to chemicals of concern supported by a just funding mechanism to enhance the transition to a low-waste economy focussed on reuse, taking into account, amongst other things, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as national circumstances and capabilities.

12bis We commit to integrated ocean management approaches that balance ecological, economic, and social objectives, ensuring the sustainable use of ocean resources.

13 We reaffirm our shared commitment to accelerating action to prevent, significantly reduce and control marine pollution of all kinds, including underwater noise. We support the work of the IMO in addressing ship-source pollution and dumping, discharges and emissions in the marine environment and encourage the organisation in cooperation with other competent international organisations to address the issue of ghost gear and abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear.

13bis We support the need to reduce vessel speed as a cost-effective measure to generate multiple environmental co-benefits, including reducing the risk of collision with marine mammals such as large whales and mitigating underwater noise pollution and ship strikes affecting marine mammals and other species.

13ter We affirm the urgent need to adopt a source-to-sea approach and strengthen integrated coastal zone management, area-based management, nature-based solutions, biodiversity inclusive marine spatial planning and climate action and adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction strategies to restore and enhance the natural resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems.

13quat We commit to nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches to conserve, restore and effectively protect natural buffers such as mangroves, seagrasses, kelp forests, salt marshes and coral reefs, while promoting sustainable livelihoods and preserving biodiversity.

13quint We stress the importance of scaled up and accelerated implementation of the Early Warnings for All initiative to ensure coastal communities vulnerable to hazardous weather, water or climate events have equitable access to timely, accurate, and actionable information to enable them to take early and anticipatory action.

- 14 We emphasize the importance of a rigorous implementation of the precautionary principle or approach, including for deep sea mining, and the need for increased scientific knowledge on deep-sea ecosystems, especially given the high vulnerability to impact and limited chance of recovery. This includes deep-sea mining, deep-sea fisheries and marine carbon dioxide removal. We note the work of the International Seabed Authority and urge its members to work to develop robust environmental policies and rules, regulations and procedures and enhance scientific marine research in accordance with the UNCLOS and in conformity with SDG 14, CBD COP15 Decisions, the BBNJ Agreement and related political commitments and instruments, and request that this is grounded in science, good governance (including transparency) and global benefit. We recognize that these efforts must be informed by the latest scientific discoveries and knowledge. Such measures are essential to safeguarding marine biodiversity, preserving the integrity of deep-sea ecosystems, and protecting these invaluable resources for present and future generations. With this in mind, we urge the Members of the International Seabed Authority to adopt a moratorium or precautionary pause on deep-sea mining until sufficient independent scientific information has been obtained to ensure effective protection for the marine environment from harmful effects and prevention of damage to the flora and fauna and biodiversity, and that any such activities are consistent with the common heritage of humankind principle and the free prior informed consent of Indigenous Peoples.

14bis We stress the importance of improving the scientific understanding of marine biodiversity across mesopelagic, deep sea and benthic ecosystems and linkages between them, in support of the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity.

Realizing sustainable ocean-based economies

- 15 We recognise the tremendous opportunities offered by sustainable ocean-based economies for States, particularly SIDS, and LDCs, to eradicate poverty, achieve balanced and sustainable economic growth and social development while safeguarding the health, resilience and productivity of coastal and marine

ecosystems for present and future generations. We further recognize the importance of ensuring that international trade and environmental policies are mutually supportive.

16 We recognise the essential role of sustainable ocean plans in achieving sustainable ocean-based economies and invite coastal states to consider joining initiatives such as the 100% Alliance, to ensure 100 per cent of ocean areas under national jurisdiction are sustainably managed by 2030. We commit to supporting capacity building, knowledge exchange, and financial mobilisation to enable countries, especially SIDS and LDCs, to develop and implement sustainable ocean plans, **making ocean protection the norm, not the exception.**

17 Recognising that the burden of proof must **lie on extractive and polluting sectors, as implied in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration of 1992, we shall convene a group of experts to report in 2027, one year before UNOC4, on ways to improve its implementation.**

18 As a key pillar of the ocean economy, fisheries and aquaculture provide livelihoods, economic opportunities, food security and nutrition to **billions** worldwide. We emphasize the urgent need to improve their sustainability to combat malnutrition and poverty, particularly for populations in vulnerable situations, while ensuring the long-term health of marine ecosystem. While noting variability between and within regions, we are deeply troubled by the continuously degrading accumulated trends at the global level in the status of marine fish stocks due to unsustainable **high impact** practices, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overcapacity and overfishing, climate change, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems degradation.

18bis We encourage all States to promote participatory management schemes for small-scale fisheries in accordance with national laws, regulations and practices, as well as the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. We urge States to take the necessary actions, in line with international law, to prevent the entry into international trade of fish and fishery products caught in ways that violate conservation and management measures established under international law. We call on continuing efforts in the regional fisheries management organisations to establish sound management measures for sustainable fisheries and call upon countries and RFMOs to step up control and enforcement.

18ter **We are committed to combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and call for decisive action to address this critical issue. We stress the importance of fully implementing the 2009 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), alongside the**

need for transparent vessel ownership and tracking information, and enhanced data exchange mechanisms to ensure greater accountability and more effective management of marine resources. [based on the UNSFR A/RES/79/145, Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. Revised Edition, the Report of the Thirty-Sixth Session of the Committee on Fisheries July 2024 and the First Session of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management 2024]

18quat Recognising the critical importance of coastal communities and indigenous peoples engaged in low-impact small-scale fishing practices for global food security and poverty alleviation, we note with concern that coastal communities and indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by industrial fishing and aquaculture, infrastructure projects, coastal and seabed mining and other large-scale commercial activities, and will grant low-impact fishers priority access to fishing areas and resources, protect their traditional tenure rights, promote inclusive co-management, guarantee the participation of women, as well as the need for transparency and accountability in resource management.

18quint We acknowledge the significant risks faced by hundreds of thousands of fish workers worldwide and urge States to take immediate action, including prioritizing the urgent and wide ratification and implementation of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention. Furthermore, we call for the adoption of comprehensive legislation and action plans to protect migrant fishers, including the enforcement of human rights due diligence obligations. It is equally important to ensure that States facilitate a just and fair transition for workers, providing opportunities for sustainable jobs away from the harms of destructive fishing practices and overfishing.

18sxt We shall take decisive and collective action to accelerate the transition to sustainable and humane fishing and aquaculture systems, which requires enhancing marine spatial planning, maritime law enforcement, science-based management, species-specific aquatic animal welfare standards, low-impact fishing methods, promoting, scaling up and replicating successes, and investing in low-trophic and plant-based aquaculture.

- 19 We urge World Trade Organization (WTO) Members to deposit their instruments of acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to accelerate its entry into force and implementation. We call on members to urgently advance and conclude negotiations as soon as possible and by its 14th Ministerial Conference on additional provisions on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing to achieve a comprehensive fisheries subsidies agreement, including an end to indirect subsidies such as tax exemptions on diesel fuel, that fully delivers SDG target 14.6. In this context, we welcome the OECD Recommendation on Eliminating Government Support to Illegal, Unreported and

Unregulated Fishing which also aims to facilitate the implementation of the WTO Agreement. In addition, States should phase out harmful fisheries subsidies that drive overcapacity, incentivise larger scale damaging fishing practices, and undermine small scale low impact fishing opportunities and activities.

19bis We commit to accelerate the implementation of SDG14.6 target by eliminating from our national budgets, starting in 2026, fisheries subsidies contributing to overfishing and overcapacity.

- 20 We recognise the critical roles of maritime transport in the global economy and the challenges for the sector to increase its sustainability. Decarbonisation of shipping remains an urgent priority. We welcome the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) adoption of the 2023 Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Ships and its revised ambition to reach net-zero emissions from international shipping by or around i.e. close to 2050. To contribute to the delivery of these ambitions, we commit to the adoption of a goal-based marine fuel standard and a maritime GHG emissions pricing mechanism in 2025, and for these to come into force in 2027. Beyond decarbonization, we recognise the need to regulate and secure plastic transportation across its entire lifecycle, from pellets to plastic products to plastic waste, to prevent pollution and strengthen maritime environmental protection.

Accelerating action

- 21 We urge States to enhance law enforcement, judicial cooperation, and cross-sectoral coordination to address crimes affecting the ocean, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, transnational crimes in the fisheries sector and value chain, pollution crimes in the marine environment, and the trafficking of marine species. These crimes not only deplete keystone species, destabilizing marine ecosystems, but also contribute to broader environmental degradation and organized criminal activities that exploit jurisdictional and enforcement gaps at sea. We emphasize the growing convergence of environmental crimes at sea, including waste dumping, oil and chemicals spills, and marine species trafficking, which undermine ocean governance and sustainable resource management.

21bis. We acknowledge that the transnational and highly organized nature of these crimes demands a coordinated, intelligence-led response. Strengthening international cooperation through real-time intelligence-sharing, harnessing technology and AI-driven surveillance tools, joint enforcement operations, and harmonized legal frameworks is essential to closing enforcement gaps and dismantling criminal networks that operate across multiple jurisdictions.

21ter Public-private partnerships have an important role to play in enhancing enforcement efforts. Collaboration between governments, industry, and civil society can strengthen monitoring and reporting mechanisms, ensuring that maritime environmental crimes do not go unchecked. By fostering trust and

cooperation between these stakeholders, we can create a more comprehensive response to threats against marine ecosystems.

21quat Climate change further exacerbates these threats, increasing ocean stressors such as rising sea temperatures, acidification, and extreme weather events, which, in turn, intensify resource scarcity and create conditions that facilitate illicit activities at sea. Strengthening the protection of marine biodiversity, including within marine protected areas (MPAs) and in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), is crucial to ensuring ecological and legal integrity. We call for the full and coordinated implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the BBNJ Agreement, and relevant regional fisheries agreements.

21quint We acknowledge that a more integrated, intelligence-driven, and cooperative approach is essential to safeguarding the long-term sustainability of ocean resources, protecting marine biodiversity, and upholding the rule of law in ocean governance. By bridging the gap between conservation efforts and enforcement strategies, improving data and intelligence-sharing, and strengthening the capacity of institutions responsible for safeguarding our oceans, meaningful steps toward addressing these complex crimes can contribute towards a more secure and resilient marine environment.

To achieve this, we acknowledge the need to strengthen capacity-building in maritime law enforcement, enhance intelligence-sharing, improve maritime domain awareness, and bolster judicial cooperation, ensuring that legal frameworks are effectively enforced. A holistic and cooperative approach is essential to safeguarding the long-term sustainability of ocean resources, protecting marine biodiversity, and upholding the rule of law in ocean governance.

22 We welcome the adoption of the UNSFR (A/RES/79/145) and its recognition of the importance of transparency for effective fisheries management, its role in enhancing and fostering sustainable practices, and ensuring the responsible management of marine resources. We urge States to enhance efforts, and relevant international organisations, including RFMOs and arrangements, to consider ways to better integrate transparent practices into fisheries management and promote data exchange [*based on the UNSFR 79/145*]

23 We recognize the importance of vessel tracking in monitoring compliance, and surveillance measures and high seas inspection and encourage States to support initiatives that enhance tracking capabilities to ensure the responsible and sustainable management of marine resources. We note the ongoing discussions within the FAO Committee on Fisheries on the importance and challenges of identifying beneficial ownership of fishing vessels and urge further action to address these challenges [*based on*

paragraphs 130 and 96 of the UNSFR and 14 c) and 14 l) of the Report of the Thirty-Sixth Session of the Committee on Fisheries July 2024].

24 We welcome the adoption of the Agreement under the UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), and **urge** States to sign, ratify, approve, accept and accede the Agreement **without delay** to promote its early entry into force **and accelerated implementation**. We welcome resolution 78/272 of the General Assembly establishing the Preparatory Commission to prepare for the entry into force of the Agreement and for the first Conference of the Parties and call upon States to engage in the Commission **to support modalities that operationalize the BBNJ Agreement as early as possible and in an equitable, effective and transparent manner**. We recognise the **critical** role the Agreement will play to reaching the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly 30x30, **and tackling the global biodiversity and climate crises**.

24bis We emphasize the need for international cooperation to adequately remove barriers which negatively impact capacity of States in relation to the conservation and sustainable management of marine resources, marine scientific resources, and other activities in the marine environment.

24ter **We also encourage States to immediately start preparing the financial and other means of implementation for marine protected areas in the high seas, notably with regards to the management authorities of the protected areas, the human resources, and the technological and other means of monitoring, control, and surveillance of human activities in the protected areas**.

25 We encourage States **and RFMOs** to take advantage of using the updated modalities for modification and description of areas meeting the criteria for ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and explore potential synergies with the future implementation of the BBNJ.

26 We emphasize the critical need for ocean accounting and mapping of coastal and marine ecosystems to inform policy decisions, development planning including marine spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management as well as conservation planning.

27 Ocean action must be based on the best available science and knowledge, including, as appropriate, relevant traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and local knowledge systems, **and the wide application of the precautionary principle**. To that end we:

- a. Affirm the value of strengthening sharing of knowledge and expertise, including, where there is free, prior and informed consent, the **knowledge**, innovations, practices and technology of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, traditional knowledge, and local knowledge systems.

- b. Support **responsible** scientific research to address the multiple challenges of climate change, food security, energy transitions, pollution, disaster risk and biodiversity loss.
- c. Commit to further improving the scientific understanding of the ocean and supporting **ecologically coherent** sustainable science- and knowledge- based measures, exchanges and collaboration to accelerate action, including through the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), the UN Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, and its World Ocean Assessments, and integrating ocean into the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service. **We also recognise the role of participatory science and research in mobilizing relevant stakeholders - such as youth, local communities and citizen scientists - to enhance data collection, long-term environmental monitoring, and public engagement, fostering a deeper connection between science and society, strengthening adaptive management, and accelerating action.**
- d. Support a strong transdisciplinary science-policy interface to provide evidence-based and contextually relevant scientific and socio-economic information to inform policies and actions that promote long-term ocean sustainability. **Strengthen ecosystem monitoring by refining and applying indicators for open ocean and deep-sea ecosystems, addressing data gaps to enhance informed decision-making and ensure inclusive, evidence-based action.**
- dbis Use diverse and multilingual scientific knowledge from a variety of sources, from different regions and in different languages.
- dter We will assess the opportunity of an International Panel for Ocean Sustainability (IPOS) that promotes the conservation and sustainable long-term use of the ocean, engages decision-makers, fosters inclusiveness, and stimulates innovation through interdisciplinary research.
- e. Support the coordination of international, regional, subregional and national scientific observation and data collection efforts, including as appropriate through the development of integrated information management, digital representation of the ocean, infrastructure and systems that provide access to reliable, timely and high-quality marine data.
- f. Recognise the contributions of effective area-based management tools, such as marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, including through traditional marine tenure and community-based resource management, to support the health and resilience of the ocean and coastal ecosystems and the coastal communities that depend on them, and the need to, where applicable, invest in maintaining or enhancing their contributions, **including in MPAs in the Southern Ocean as proposed within the Commission for the**

Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), as well as the establishment of corridors that connect MPAs, especially in areas used by migratory species.

- fbis. Encourage cooperation among coastal authorities of neighbouring countries to strengthen or, when appropriate, establish coordination mechanism for the integrated management and sustainable development of coastal and marine areas, fostering biodiversity, connectivity across borders, and promoting the sustainable use of marine resources at the local, national and regional levels
- g. Enhance cooperation to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration, knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practices within marine scientific research, and to support developing countries in addressing their constraints in access to technology, and analysing and using reliable data and statistics.
- h. Recognise the vital role of the blue bioeconomy for all industries and sectors related to the marine environment.

28 We recognise that SDG 14 is one of the least well-funded SDGs and that accelerating ocean action requires new, additional, and predictable and adequate means of implementation and significantly increased, accessible finance to all countries, in particular SIDS and LDCs. In this regard, we:

- a. Commit to ensure that economic and financial policies and resources are effective in supporting small-scale fishers, women and girls, youth, and Indigenous communities, including their direct access to funding, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- b. Promote the sustainable ocean economy as an attractive investment opportunity among mainstream financial institutions in line with SDGs through instruments such as Blue Bonds and Blue Loans and ocean-related debt swaps.
- c. Emphasize the necessity of the provision and mobilization of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to developing countries, in particular small island developing States and LDCs.
- d. Ensure the allocation of adequate resources to developing countries, prioritizing public grant-based concessional finance and non-debt instruments, with a view to overcoming financial barriers and capacity constraints.
- e. Encourage the use of all suitable financial instruments including, microfinance, payments for eco-systems services, credit mechanisms, debt-for-nature swap, grants and subsidies, carbon

taxes on shipping, noting the utilization of instruments would differ based on different national contexts.

- f. Encourage the active and meaningful involvement of the private sector, including banks, insurers and investors, to align with financial flows and redirect their products and services towards the transition to sustainable ocean-based economies including by finding innovative and financially sustainable solutions to support the health and resilience of the ocean.
 - g. Encourage collaboration on blended finance mechanisms and other mechanisms as appropriate to de-risk investments in developing countries, especially SIDS and LDCs.
 - h. Ensure the mobilisation of resources from all sources, including concessional financing, from a variety of sources, including from Multilateral Development Banks, sovereign wealth funds, national development banks and governments with a view to overcoming financial barriers, especially in vulnerable developing countries.
 - i. Provide adequate support to coastal communities, in particular small-scale fishers, women and girls, youth, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities in developing and implementing locally driven adaptation measures and stress the importance of enhancing their capacity to effectively engage, advocate and manage marine resources in a sustainable manner.
 - j. Highlight that charities, philanthropies and other donors will be essential, including in providing grants and enabling capital and through concessional financing.
 - k. Support climate and biodiversity finance that produces synergies benefiting the ocean, **including by redirecting environmentally and socially harmful subsidies adversely affecting marine biodiversity in line with Target 18 of the KMGBF**. We value the voluntary commitments made to implement SDG 14, including at UN Ocean Conferences, and encourage partnerships to expand initiatives and increase their impact. We acknowledge the inclusive nature of voluntary commitments and underscore the need for appropriate monitoring, review and follow-up on the progress on voluntary commitments made at UN Ocean Conferences.
- 28bis. We emphasize the critical importance of mainstreaming ocean related issues into broader multilateral efforts and fora, to ensure that ocean sustainability is effectively integrated and adequately addressed in the relevant discussions and agendas, particularly those directly linked to ocean health, such as those addressing economic development, food security and climate change
- 28ter. Conscious of the numerous crises the ocean faces, we commit to remain engaged on the matter, to not lose sight of our ambition, and to look forward to future UN Ocean Conferences that will reinforce multilateral ocean governance in a UN system-wide approach.

Supporting thriving ocean societies

- 29 We emphasize the importance of recognizing and respecting all ocean peoples, their institutions, knowledge systems, values, and worldviews, particularly those of Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers, and local communities, as well as coastal and island nations, whose connection to and reliance on the ocean is fundamental to their cultures, economies, and societies [based on KMGBF), Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)].
- 30 We reaffirm our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights - including the unique rights of Indigenous Peoples, small-scale-fishers and traditional local communities, groups subject to discrimination (e.g, ethnic, religious and minority groups), and potentially vulnerable groups (e.g., women and girls, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, displaced persons) [based on UDHR, UNDRIP and UNDROP)].
- 31 We acknowledge the importance of protecting the marine tenure and access rights of coastal populations, including Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers, and traditional local communities, who are historically connected to and continue to rely on marine territories and resources for subsistence, livelihoods, culture and security [based on UNDRIP, UNDROP, UN FAO Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines, UN FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure].
- 32 We emphasize the need to uphold the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable coastal and marine environment, encompassing a safe climate, clean air, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, safe and sufficient water, healthy and sustainable food, and non-toxic environments [based on UNHRC A/HRC/RES/48/13 and UNGA Resolution A/RES/76/300].
- 33 We further emphasize the need to establish mechanisms for the fair and equitable distribution of benefits of the ocean across all groups in society and nations, which requires identifying the monetary and non-monetary benefits and harms arising from ocean development, conservation and management actions, and creating contextually appropriate mitigation processes to avoid, minimize or compensate for harms [based on UNCLOS, UNBBNJ, KMGBF, Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment (UN Doc. A/HRC/37/59, 2018), United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights].
- 34 We commit to inclusive and transparent ocean-related decision-making that ensures all ocean peoples have timely access to information in accessible formats, the opportunity for full and effective participation, including guaranteeing free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous

Peoples and local communities, and access to justice to remedy conflicts and current and historical disputes [*based on KMGBF, UNDRIP, UNDROP, UNGA A/RES/76/300*].

35 We call for articulation of clear definitions of the obligations and responsibilities of all state and non-state parties to uphold human rights, and the establishment of effective mechanisms and processes to holding actors accountable for their decisions made and actions taken in marine and coastal environments [*based on KMGBF, Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*].