

STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14

9 JUNE 2017

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Mr President,

Allow me to congratulate His Excellency Josaia Voreque Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji and Her Excellency Isabella Loving, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate of Sweden, on their election as the Presidents of the Conference. We also congratulate the other Bureau members on their election.

2. I wish to express my delegation's confidence in the Co-Presidents' leadership and ability to steer this meeting. I also wish to assure the Co-Presidents of my delegation's fullest cooperation to enable you to fulfil your responsibilities.

3. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Portugal and Singapore, as the Co-Facilitators of the draft Call for Action Political Declaration, for their hard work in bringing together the views and perspectives of delegations.

4. At the outset, Malaysia wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President,

5. It is without a doubt that the Malaysia is highly dependent on the ocean and seas. As a trading nation that is dependent on maritime routes and one of the biggest exporter of containerised cargo (12th biggest with 2.06 millions of TEUs in 2014), we identify ourselves as a maritime nation. It is therefore only natural that we place great importance on the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, seas and marine resources.

6. As such, Malaysia is supportive of the Call for Action Declaration to be adopted by this Conference. We view the Call for Action as encapsulating our national and also the international community's collective commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources. It provides a snapshot and serves as a reminder of our efforts to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources to achieve the targets of SDG 14.

Mr. President,

7. Goal 14: Life Below Water is in line with the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020). In the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, the coastal ecosystems will be conserved to act as natural buffers against the impact of climate change. The Government of Malaysia will strengthen efforts to improve the management of coastal areas as well as enhancing marine biodiversity through conservation measures, particularly mangrove forests and related coastal forest species. It is targeted that by year 2020, 10% of coastal and marine areas would be gazetted as protected area.

8. To achieve the target, a number of factors would need to be considered and addressed when discussing ocean governance and general management of the national waters. These include:

(i) One: to resolve conflicts between the different uses of the sea; to promote economic development; and to protect the marine environment;

(ii) Two: the sectoral manner in which the maritime sector in Malaysia is managed. The management system is dependent on each tier of governance where planning and coordination, implementation and enforcement, and developmental roles, within the confines of their jurisdiction, are defined by the constitution, laws and governmental directives; and

(iii) Three: there is an increasing need to identify new opportunities and industries for wealth generation from the seas such as marine ecotourism and renewable energy while enhancing existing ones such as fisheries and aquaculture. Appropriate policy initiatives in these areas could support the traditional maritime sector such as ports and shipping towards further strengthening the national economy.

9. The Economic Planning Unit of Prime Minister's Department, as the national focal point for the implementation of SDGs, in consultation with the relevant ministries, agencies and civil society, is in the midst of preparing the SDG Roadmap for Malaysia. The Roadmap will include the current situation, gaps and challenges, as well as the way forward to realise all the Goals under the SDGs. The Roadmap is expected to be published this year.

Mr, President,

10. Allow me to share some of the measures undertaken by Malaysia in our efforts to achieve SDG 14. The Department of Fisheries of Malaysia has just completed the national marine fishery resources assessment. With the new available scientific knowledge and information, Malaysia is gradually shifting into the species-area specific fisheries management plan.

11. The National Plan of Action on Fishing Capacity is aimed at ensuring that levels of fishing efforts commensurate with sustainable use of fishery resources. The assessment of the fishing capacity is closely related to the availability of fisheries resources status. A resource survey conducted from 2013-2015 will provide the data on this status. This in turn would facilitate in determining the optimal fishing capacity, as well as policy directions and strategies to manage fishing capacity.

12. Malaysia sees IUU fishing as undermining sustainability and threatening food security. We are ensuring that the gravity of the sanctions as provided in domestic legislation are adequate and would deprive IUU actors from accruing benefits from their activities. Malaysia's commitment is further manifested in the National Plan of Action on IUU. Malaysia has also greatly improved its domestic coordination in implementing port State measures, consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Mr. President,

13. Malaysia stands committed with other Member States towards realising the Targets under SDG 14, to halt and reverse the decline in the health of our ocean and seas caused by anthropogenic activities. We see the Ocean Conference as an occasion where we can begin to embark on a path that would benefit present and future generations.

14. The science is available and we should be guided by it to enable us to begin the healing and recovery process for our ocean and seas. We should see Goal 14 not as an end in itself, but rather as means of achieving a desired and sustainable level of development.

Thank you, Mr. President.