

Thank you Madame President and good afternoon all. I am honored to deliver these remarks on behalf of the High Seas Alliance, and as this will also be our final statement, would like to commend you, your team and the facilitators for your tremendous work in skillfully leading us through this first IGC meeting. We also extend our appreciation to the Bureau, and all delegations for the constructive atmosphere that was present throughout the meeting, as well as DOALOS and the interpreters for providing its excellent and tireless support to us all throughout this meeting.

Madame President, your Aid to Discussion was a valuable tool in helping with smooth sailing from the PrepCom into the intergovernmental conference. Now, as we move towards substantive negotiations, we support many governments today, including the Group of 77 and China, Algeria on behalf of the African Group, the European Union, Maldives on behalf of AOSIS, Samoa on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, Nauru on behalf of the PSIDS, Belize on behalf of CARICOM, Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of States, and many other delegations toward the preparation of a zero draft text. We give you our full support and we have every confidence that you will navigate the waters ahead and steer us towards our destination and a concrete outcome by 2020.

While there are a number of ways an initial draft could take shape, we also have full confidence in you to develop a format with legal text that will keep us on course on an ambitious and bold journey towards sustainable high seas and deep seabed.

We support those delegations calling for this text to be made available well ahead of the second IGC if possible, in order to give delegations sufficient time to conduct the necessary national and regional consultations prior to the next meeting.

We are also acutely aware of the ten typhoons, tropical storms and hurricanes which many people around the planet face this week, and which, scientists tell us, are more destructive due to climate change warming the oceans. This is a sober reminder of the immediate importance of the ocean to us all, and we express solidarity with people dealing with their effects around the globe.

Lastly, inspired by both Algeria on behalf of the African Group and Facilitator Lefevre, we remember the words of poet Walt Whitman, "O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done" - or this first meeting is nearly done anyway - and we thank you again, O Captain, for guiding us through a very constructive and historic first session.

Thank you very much.