

Intervention under agenda item 2

**Promoting economic, social and environmental cooperation on oceans for sustainable development**

Mr. Chair,  
Distinguished Delegates,

As an island nation, the theme topic of the current Commission session is of paramount importance for Sri Lanka, which is located in a strategic position in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka has made certain key commitments towards sustainable fisheries, preserving livelihoods, prevention of marine pollution, maritime sustainable blue economy, peaceful navigation in Indian Ocean and maritime connectivity.

The devastating damages caused by periodic cyclones and environmental hazards reminds us of the need for collaboration on climate issues. We express our solidarity with all South Asian Countries Affected by cyclone Amphan.

While recognizing the importance of a stable and secure maritime environment for national and regional prosperity, since 2018, Sri Lanka has taken on the responsibility of being the Coordinator of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (IORA-WGMSS), and the First Meeting of the group held in Colombo in August 2019 provided a platform to discuss shared priorities of member States in the sphere of maritime safety and security, mainly focusing on tackling maritime criminal activities in the Indian Ocean, including, drug trafficking, transnational crimes and the sustainable global fishing industry. Without limiting to the region, Sri Lanka has been party to related international conventions including leading the negotiations of the UNCLOS, and actively engaging in regional as well as international platforms, including initiating and hosting multilateral engagements series 'The Indian Ocean: Defining our Future'.

Aligning with Sri Lanka's international obligations and commitments related to SDGs, Sri Lanka's economic and development agenda over the recent past have evolved with a focus on Blue – Green Economy with focus towards sustainable utilization of ocean resources. Outlining the vision of the National Policy Framework of the country by H.E. the President, Sri Lanka has planned to upgrade Ocean University on par with international standards, promote ocean exploration, ensure coastal erosion mitigation, develop action plan to safe guard coastal area, and prevent pollution while adapting environmental friendly policies.

Sri Lanka also acknowledges its commitment towards the prevention of marine plastic pollution as a country, which introduced a national policy for banning selected categories of polythene and polythene products in 2017. As a measure to reduce marine plastics and debris, Sri Lanka encourages more Public Private Partnership (PPP) and multi-stakeholder engagements in innovative solutions, including producing microfilaments for cleaning tools, yarns for apparels, for example T-Shirts for Sri Lanka Cricket T-20, was made out of plastic wastes, promoting circular economy. In the socio-economic challenges posted by COVID-19 crisis, more innovative and collaborative measures at regional and multilateral levels will help States to realize and better synchronize their commitments and implementations on Goal 13 and 14.

Sri Lanka strongly supports the theme study and the recommendation of enhancing capacities of establishing and maintaining accounts of oceans and a delegation from Sri Lanka participated at the First Global Dialogue on Ocean Accounting and the First Annual Meeting of the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership held in November 2019, in Australia.

Recognizing the importance of SDG 14 Sri Lanka was pleased to co-sponsor the theme Resolution of this Session on Oceans and we will continue to promote economic, social and environmental cooperation on oceans for sustainable development.

Thank you