ITEM 74: INTRODUCTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES RESOLUTION

Speech by Ambassador Carolyn Schwalger
Deputy Permanent Representative, New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

9 December 2014
Mr President –

My delegation is pleased to join many others in co-sponsoring the draft resolution “Oceans and the Law of the Sea”, introduced by Trinidad and Tobago; and we compliment Ambassador Eden Charles on his careful stewardship of that draft.

New Zealand also had the honour to coordinate the informal consultations on the draft resolution on sustainable fisheries, and is pleased now to introduce it, on behalf of all its sponsors. This year’s draft resolution is another step forward in the conservation and management of fisheries, which underpin much of the world’s sustainable development.

It addresses important issues, such as implementation of outcomes of the Small Island Developing States Conference, work undertaken in other fora, such as the FAO to promote responsible and sustainable fishing, and issues for the bottom fishing review and the Resumed Review Conference.

The Small Island Developing States Conference in Samoa in September focused on SIDS as a special case for sustainable development, and considered a range of issues, including sustainable fisheries. This draft calls for the full implementation of that Conference’s Outcome Document, “Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action” [SAMOA] Pathway”.

This year, the draft resolution also addresses a number of important decisions taken at the FAO’s Committee for Fisheries, including endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance and the decision to elaborate guidelines and other relevant criteria relating to catch documentation schemes. The focus in this draft on these and other issues related to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing reflects the international community’s continued concern regarding IUU fishing, and its impact on our ability to sustainably manage fish stocks; and the draft recognises the role of all states - whether coastal, flag, port or market - in combatting IUU fishing.

Mr President –
The draft resolution continues to recognise the central role of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement in international fisheries governance. Indeed, 2014 is a key milestone for UNCLOS, with 16 November marking 20 years since its entry into force; and, next year, on 4 December, we’ll mark 20 years since the Fish Stocks Agreement was opened for signature.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to resume the Review Conference on the Agreement in the first part of 2016, with a view to assessing its effectiveness in securing the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks; and will be an important opportunity to assess the ongoing effectiveness of the Fish Stocks Agreement.

The draft resolution also includes a decision to proceed with another bottom fishing review in 2016, to be preceded by a two-day workshop, with a view to ensuring effective implementation of existing UN-mandated bottom fishing measures and, where necessary, to make further recommendations.

Mr President –

New Zealand thanks Director Gabriele Goettsche-Wanli and the staff of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for their expertise and support on both draft resolutions.

And, again, we thank Ambassador Charles [of Trinidad and Tobago] for his expert coordination of the draft resolution on oceans and the law of the sea; and I express my particular appreciation for the hard work and co-operation of delegations in crafting both drafts.

It’s our hope that this constructive and collaborative engagement is maintained as we continue addressing the numerous and complex issues that face our oceans and fisheries