STATEMENT

BY

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INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

ON THE OMNIBUS RESOLUTION ON OCEANS

AND THE LAW OF THE SEA:

INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/6/L.29

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

United Nations, New York
December 09, 2014
Mr. President

Trinidad and Tobago is honoured to have coordinated the informal consultations on the draft resolution on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (A/69/L.29).

This important exercise on the agenda of the General Assembly would not have been successful without the support of all delegations, who demonstrated tremendous cooperation and flexibility as they pursued and defended their national interests during two rounds of negotiations of five days each which ended on November 25 of this year.

I also wish to acknowledge the support provided to me during the negotiations, and also intersessionally, to the Director and staff of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea ("DOALOS") which provided Secretariat services and also advice to me throughout the process.

We also welcome the reports of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea as they provided very relevant information on the issues covered in the draft resolution.

Mr. President

The draft resolution before us is being introduced to the General Assembly 20 years since the entry into force of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("the Convention"), which itself was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations.

The draft resolution before us contains elements necessary for the management, preservation and sustainable use of the resources of our oceans and seas and guidelines for the conduct of States in discharging their obligations flowing from the international law of the sea, including the Convention.

During the negotiations delegations recognized that oceans, seas and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the earth’s ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it, that international law as reflected in the Convention, provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and of their resources for sustainable development.

During the negotiations, delegations considered and were guided by several initiatives, including, the reports of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (the Regular Process), on the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working), on the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (the Informal Consultative Process at its fifteenth meeting), and the twenty-fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, the outcome document entitled: "The Future We Want", adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 20 to 22 June, 2012; as well, as reports of the Secretary-
General on oceans and seas. To these must be added the contributions of individual Member States and regional and other groupings.

Delegations also considered inputs from agencies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Mr. President

The draft resolution is forty-nine pages in length and contains 313 pages, despite attempts by the Coordinator to streamline the document. This emphasizes its comprehensive character and scope and takes into consideration obligations of States which arise from the Convention, other global agreements, as well as regional undertakings.

A number of issues of importance to Member States are included in the draft resolution. These include the following:

- The peaceful settlement of disputes;
- The work of treaty-bodies established under the Convention, namely, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the International Seabed Authority;
- Maritime safety and security and flag state implementation,
- Marine science;
- Marine biodiversity
- Marine environment and marine resources
- Matters concerning the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction;
- The Regular Process
- The Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea;
- Capacity building and Regional cooperation; and,
- Coordination and Cooperation
- Regional Cooperation
- Activities of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

Each paragraph in the draft resolution was adopted by consensus as delegations ensured that the text provided language which represented no less than their minimum negotiating positions after discussions of the whole, as well as matters which were subject to more intimate examination by small groups appointed by the Coordinator.

At the same time, Mr. President, delegations agreed that where past practice had to be dispensed with in order to accommodate a particular development, they were prepared to do so based on a particular understanding.

Mr. President

Each paragraph is important to the object and purpose of the resolution. As Coordinator, however, I was very pleased with the efforts made by delegations to agree on language relating to improving the conditions of service of Members of the Commission on the Limits of the
Continental Shelf, a treaty body which, unlike the two others established by the Convention is not provided with the resources adequate to fulfilling its very important mandate.

Agreement also agreed that "in the light of resolution 67/78, and in order to prepare for the decision on the development of an international instrument under the Convention to be taken at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, to make recommendations to the Assembly at the Working Group meeting to be held from 20 to 23 January, 2015 on the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument under the Convention.

Mr. President,

After ten days (10) days of intensive negotiations of the Whole which also included a series of meetings of small groups and bilateral undertakings, delegations were able to conclude the draft resolution which seeks to aid Member States, as well as other entities in implementing obligations geared towards, among other things, the sustainable use of our oceans and seas.

It is my expectation that the same spirit of cooperation and understanding which characterized the negotiations would be demonstrated by delegations and the draft resolution, which is by no means a perfect document, when resolution A/69/L.29 is submitted and its adopted by consensus.

I thank you.