Statement by

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On

Agenda item: 74 (a) and (b)
"Oceans and the Law of the Sea"

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Mr. President

At the outset, I would like to thank you for convening today's meeting for the consideration of the agenda item "Oceans and the Law of the Sea", which is a subject of importance and interest for the whole international community.

Mr. President

This year marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982, which is "the Constitution for the Oceans" and I take this opportunity to congratulate all for that.

Mr. President

The Convention together with the related Agreements represents a major achievement in codification and progressive development of international law. It enjoys wide acceptance with 166 States being Parties to it at present. The Convention provides the legal framework for the use of oceans and seas and their resources by establishing a delicate balance between the need for economic and social development and the need to protect and preserve the marine environment and conserve and manage its resources.

Mr. President

The oceans cover almost three quarters of the Earth. As the States look to ocean resources as a means to economic growth and social advancement, development of an ocean-based economy is attracting more attention.

Over the past 20 years, the Convention has contributed pre-eminently to the sustainable development of the oceans and seas and to the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples of the world.

This proves and as reflected in the document "Future we want", oceans and seas got a critical role to play in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. President

We must, however, remember that realizing the full potential of oceans and seas depends on carrying out ocean-based activities in a sustainable manner, in accordance with internationally agreed principles, in particular the principles contained in the Convention.

Our oceans face huge challenges including the deterioration of the marine environment, biodiversity loss, climate change, illegal fishing practices and those relating to the maritime safety and security including the acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea.
The acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, committed in any part of the world, pose a grave threat to maritime trade and the security of shipping. Piracy endangers lives of seafarers, affects national security, territorial integrity and hampers economic development of nations.

We appreciate the work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) in containing piracy through international cooperation and coordination. India has actively participated in international efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea. We are gratified that these efforts are yielding results.

Mr. President

We thank the Secretary-General for his Report A/69/71 and Addendum thereto on issues concerning oceans and the law of the sea.

We welcome the report A/69/90 of the Co-Chairs of the fifteenth Meeting of the United Nations open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP), in which deliberations focused on the topic “The role of seafood in global food security”. Fisheries being the principal source of seafood, the participants recognized its importance in the global food security and nutritional value for human being. The increasing pollution level of marine environment and the illegal and disruptive fishing practices are serious concerns, as they pose threat to healthy fisheries and their management. We stress the need of devising improved methods of harvesting marine living resources to help combat illegal and disruptive fishing and to ensure the healthy, safe and sustainable fisheries required to add to the global food security.

Mr. President

We welcome the report A/69/77 of the Co-Chairs of the meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of marine environment, including socio-economic aspects. We commend the efforts toward materializing the first global integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment. We are pleased to inform in this regard that the Government of India had hosted a Workshop in support of the Regular Process under the auspices of the United Nations in the City of Chennai in the last week of January 2014, which is duly taken note of by the resolution, which we are going to adopt today.

Mr. President

Another area in which the international community is engaged relates to the study of issues concerning the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. The Working Group established by the General Assembly held two meetings in the months of April and June this year, wherein the discussion focused on the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument under the Law of the Sea Convention, 1982, on issues of conservation and sustainable use
of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. As the differences of opinion surfaced due to the complexity of issues and interests, we see the appropriateness of following the principles contained in the Convention, and of taking cautious approach by avoiding hasty decisions without full scientific knowledge on relevant factors.

Mr. President

The smooth functioning of the institutions established under the Convention namely the International Sea-bed Authority, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf hold the key to the proper implementation of the provisions of the Convention and to the realization of the desired benefits from the uses of the seas. We therefore support all efforts towards ensuring their smooth functioning, and note with satisfaction the progress made by these institutions in their respective areas.

Mr. President

Being a country with a vast coastline and numerous islands, India has a traditional and abiding interest in the maritime and ocean affairs, and assures full cooperation in efforts toward ensuring the proper management and sustainable use of the oceans and seas as a responsible partner of the international community.

Finally, Mr. President we thank both the Coordinators for having successfully conducted the consultations on draft resolutions “Oceans and the Law of the Sea” and “Sustainable Fisheries”. We appreciate the value addition of various paragraphs of the draft resolution, in particular those relating to medical insurance to the members of CLCS belonging to the developing countries. We support the adoption of the Resolutions.

Thank you Mr. President.