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United Nations Headquarters, New York
February 5, 2020

Distinguished Co-Facilitators and Excellencies,

Thank you for your leadership in organizing the second UN Ocean Conference to be held in Lisbon in June 2020, and for the opportunity to provide comments. As a global leader in ocean research, education and conservation, the Monterey Bay Aquarium strongly supports the focus of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference: “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”. This focus accurately reflects the urgent need to accelerate science and successful partnerships to demonstrate progress toward Goal 14 and other related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including zero hunger, decent work and climate action. Importantly, the 2020 UN Ocean Conference also aligns with the beginning of the UN Decade of Ocean Science – a global effort to harness existing science, innovate with technology and fill critical knowledge gaps that are needed to directly address SDG 14 and other development goals. Despite these important efforts, there is urgency for increased commitments, partnerships and tools to accelerate progress, particularly for those sub-goals (14.2, 14.4, 14.6, etc.) with 2020 deadlines that will be missed.

Monterey Bay Aquarium recommends that delegates work toward a declaration and interactive dialogues that will provide an accurate baseline of information on current ocean conservation challenges, including the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture, plastic pollution, climate impacts and ocean health. In addition, the conference should highlight successful partnerships that align the private sector, governments, NGOs and stakeholders toward measurable objectives in line with the SDGs. Importantly, the declaration and interactive dialogues should galvanize governments to prioritize resources, capacity and internal coordination to ensure robust implementation of science-based management and innovative partnerships at local to national levels. These actions may also support improved international collaborations, including existing and emerging international agreements to improve sustainability and conservation of the ocean.

We urge all delegates to

From kelp forests to coral reefs to seagrass beds and mangrove ecosystems – all essential habitats warrant appropriate protections as a climate mitigation strategy to create more resilient and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

N The challenge of ocean plastic pollution represents an increasing global threat and a momentous opportunity. Research by the Monterey Bay Aquarium and others around the world show that plastic is now everywhere in the ocean, including the food web, and that this is the same plastic found in products and packaging proliferating through society. As a sige sa5g0 reWbo(sho)-4(w(c)-2(r)12(eat)(ce)@Rc)12ISg)4(E(u)3(UP c)-,3(r