

Intervention to the 2<sup>nd</sup> co-facilitators online briefing with stakeholders: inputs to zero draft of UN Ocean Conference Declaration, 17 March 2020

Organization: BirdLife International

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak Madame facilitator.

I'm speaking on behalf of BirdLife International, a partnership of 115 national conservation organizations. First, I'd like to express our welcome to the zero draft of the Declaration and all efforts put into to it. I'd also like to thank you for the opportunity to input to these discussions.

My intervention addresses paragraph 10, letter 'b'<sup>1</sup>, and it relates to by-catch in fisheries.

Science is clear that unsustainable fishing practices, both at industrial and small-scale levels, is significantly impacting marine biodiversity.

A recent assessment of threats to all seabird species conducted by BirdLife determined that bycatch (in longline, gillnet and trawl fisheries) as well as overfishing, are top threats to this group. These pressures have been identified as the primary cause of up to 95% of some seabird of albatross and over 70% of penguins species declines observed over the last decades.

Political and technical solutions are available, but they need to be fully implemented. BirdLife has worked with scientists across the globe to use seabird tracking data to identify the areas of greatest risk of interaction of seabirds and fisheries and played a key role in developing a series of by-catch mitigation measures, which are now mandatory in a number of fisheries. But uptake needs to be scaled up. Compliance with these requirements remains an issue, particularly on the high seas, and it is therefore apparent that investments in further technological innovation are needed to adequately monitor and enforce measures that protect biodiversity.

To end, we would like to see the impacts of by-catch on non-fish species, including to threatened vertebrates addressed in the zero-draft. Persistence over time of marine biodiversity is crucial for an ecologically balanced ocean.

Thank you again for the Ambassadors and facilitator for the opportunity to speak

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph referred to in the intervention:10. b. Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and minimizing waste, by-catch and discards, in order to restore fish stock to levels that produce maximum sustainable yield targets, through the use of communication tools and other technological tools for monitoring and tracking.