

FINAL

Speaking Notes

for

**The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the
Canadian Coast Guard**

at the

**Our Ocean Conference:
Marine Protection Panel**

**St. Julian's, Malta
October 5, 2017**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Good afternoon honourable colleagues, friends, partners.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I want to thank Malta and the European Union for hosting this year's Our Ocean Conference and for giving me this opportunity to share Canada's approach for conserving and protecting our three oceans.

Like many maritime nations, Canada committed to Aichi target 11, to effectively protect 10% of our marine and coastal areas by 2020. We take our commitment seriously, and we also have a self-imposed interim target of protecting 5% of our marine areas by the end of this year. I'm confident that we'll not only meet, but surpass, this goal.

Since last year's Our Ocean conference, Canada has continued our hard work on ocean protection. We've established three new Marine Protected Areas—one in each of our three oceans—and we've developed a stringent set of science-based criteria to determine what qualifies as an effective area-based conservation measure and, as such, counts towards our targets.

We have identified areas that meet these stringent criteria and that therefore act as marine refuges for fish, mammals and their habitat. These marine refuges contribute to rebuilding fish stocks and also support long-term biodiversity conservation.

In our view, the fisheries sector can be an important contributor to conserving and protecting the world's ocean. Provided that these fisheries measures are science based and can contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, we should recognize these efforts in measuring our achievements towards the targets.

Although there is not yet an agreed-upon set of *international* guidelines for other effective area-based conservation measures, Canada looks forward to sharing our extensive work on this topic and working with other countries to advance criteria that can be used by all states who share our conservation goals.

In that vein, Canada will be hosting a technical workshop in February with the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity, focused on defining other effective area-based conservation measures and international guidance that will support our collective reporting on marine conservation targets.

Canada also recognizes that future MPAs should include a set of minimum standards that set out what is and is not permitted in these areas. As we turn our attention to developing these standards, I'm pleased to announce today that I will be establishing a national advisory panel on minimum standards for future Marine Protected Areas in Canada.

I want to acknowledge that Canada's marine conservation accomplishments are the result of working across all levels of government and alongside Indigenous peoples, industry, academia, conservation groups and like-minded international partners to advance this work. We look forward to continued collaboration on minimum standards, and in all areas of marine protection.

Canada will also continue to work with Indigenous and Northern partners to explore how we can support and protect the future of the Arctic Ocean's "last ice area" where summer ice remains year round.

Since our government has been in place, we have taken a number of additional steps to conserve and protect our ocean, including \$200 million of new investments in aquatic science as the core foundation of our decisions. We are also investing \$1.5 billion in the protection of our ocean to restore coastal habitats; ensure appropriate levels of response to environmental disasters; mitigate the effects of human activities on marine living resources; and engage and train our coastal communities in our efforts.

It is the combined effects of these actions together with our marine conservation areas that will help us achieve our goals.

Canada is proud of the progress we've made to date and we recognize that there is still work ahead. We will continue to lead the way on new and innovative policies and actions that provide meaningful and lasting protection for our ocean.

Thank you.