



**Statement by Mr. Fred Sarufa, Deputy Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations at the Second Round of the United Nations General Assembly 76<sup>th</sup> Session Informal Intergovernmental Consultations on the Political Declaration for the 2022 United Nations Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, Wednesday 24 March 2022, New York**

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**Distinguished Co-Facilitators**, all protocols observed.

Let me begin by associating my delegation's remarks with those made by the respective Chairs of the Group of 77 and China (Pakistan), the Alliance of Small Island States (Antigua and Barbuda), the Pacific Islands Forum (Fiji) and the Pacific SIDS (Samoa), and I will make additional points in my national capacity.

We join other delegations in applauding you, Co-Facilitators, for the thoughtful and careful manner in which you are taking carriage of your mandate, including keeping to the aspiration we all share to ensuring a Political Declaration that is concise and focused on effectively improving on the implementation of the SDG 14. In this spirit we welcome the concise and focused overall text and tone of the Draft Declaration, which is in the right direction.

For Paragraph 1 we are at ease with its overarching message. However, to my delegation's understanding when we speak of SDG 14, it addresses three overall key aspects, which are the ocean's health, productivity and resilience. Co-Facilitators, you have correctly noted this in paragraphs 10 and 15 in the Draft Declaration, however, resilience is missing in the last line of paragraph 1. We would encourage you to include resilience in this paragraph.

For the new language in Paragraph 2, my delegation welcomes and supports its inclusion as it is important to reaffirm the June 2017 First UN Ocean Conference Declaration and from which we are building on from.

On Paragraph 4, we agree with the reference to addressing meaningfully the matured SDG 14 Target 14.2 on protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, Target 14.4 on IUU fishing, Target 14.5 on coastal and marine protected areas, and Target 14.6 on fisheries subsidies.

On paragraph 6, we are supportive of the way you have reflected the commitments made by over 100 countries regarding marine protection areas, which are important tools that can facilitate the attainment of SDG 14.

However, my delegation is of the view that this can be further strengthened by correctly reflecting this as "voluntary" commitments, rather than "commitments", as is presently noted. In doing so, this will be consistent with paragraph 5(g) of General Assembly resolution A/Res/73/292.

It is pleasing to note that the Voluntary Commitments have increased from 1,400 in June 2017 to 1,633 at present and we join our voice in encouraging not only further contributions but to effectively support their attainment.

Finally, on paragraph 9, we welcome and support the inclusion of the new language related to the BBNJ Inter-Governmental Conference process. However, my delegation is of the view that this could be further strengthened by not merely recognizing the importance of BBNJ, as is currently drafted but rather link it to its potential contribution to the ocean's health, productivity and resilience as called for by SDG 14.

Thank you, Co-Facilitators.