



2nd United Nations Ocean Conference
Plenary session
30th June 2022

Statement delivered by Her Excellency Margo Deiye, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations

Vice President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Let me commend the co-hosts, the Governments of Portugal and Kenya for hosting and organizing this very important meeting on Ocean.

For Nauru, there are three key messages.

1. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Nauru faces significant and unique sustainable development challenges due to our small size, limited natural resources, particular vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change, and over-dependence on imports. These challenges among many have been recognized time and time again;
2. We rely on the Ocean for our livelihoods and sustainable development. Increasing economic benefits from the sustainable use and management of the Ocean and its resources, is critical to the people of Nauru; and
3. Our challenges are exacerbated by the climate crisis we are in, that is further compounded by the covid pandemic as well as economic shocks from the war impacting the global fuel and food market.

In fact, Nauru is experiencing a covid wave which has prevented our high-level delegation from attending - a large disappointment to us given the priority we put on ocean issues. We are highly dependent on marine resources for our sustenance and economic development. But the ocean is not just important to Big Ocean States, it is important for all humanity and our reliance on the ocean and its bounty must be balanced by our stewardship of its health for future generations.

To take the right path, we must first acknowledge properly the challenges ahead. Climate change constitutes an existential threat to countries like Nauru and poses serious security risks to the livelihoods of our people and our viability as States. We call on the international community to do more - reduce their greenhouse gas emissions with more ambition and to take urgent action. We need partnerships and cooperation in order to address these threats.

Ocean acidification is an increasingly concerning issue. Perhaps the greatest challenge for small islands in minimizing and addressing Ocean acidification, is the accurate and timely measuring and monitoring of marine chemistry (including post-collection data analysis), a process that is technically intensive and financially demanding, and for which the human and technical capacity in the Pacific is not as robust as it should be. We are pleased that the political declaration highlights the need for strengthened international, regional, sub-regional and national scientific and systematic observation and data collection efforts, and look forward to developing partnerships which are well targeted for our needs. We also should consider how to ensure those whose reefs and marine life are being eroded because of ocean acidification and deoxygenation are compensated. Nauru is looking into the idea of a tax to help countries negatively affected by these losses.

Given the current threats to marine biodiversity it is also important to conclude at the next intergovernmental conference, an ambitious international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. The agreement, amongst other things, needs to enable the establishment of effective, cross-sectoral marine protected areas to maintain global ocean health; recognize the special relationship of small islands to the ocean; provide for fair and equitable sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources. And let me also reaffirm Nauru's support for UNCLOS, as the "constitution for the ocean" within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

For Nauru, fisheries are currently a major source, indeed one of the few sources, of funds for our national treasury. And, we support effective conservation and management measures to ensure the long term viability of the stocks. Our fisheries efforts though are hampered by the disproportionate burden for conservation of our stocks. All the countries that benefit from tuna must shoulder a fair share of the burden of conserving and managing the stocks. Otherwise, this disproportionate burden taxes our thinly stretched financial and technical capacities, hampering our ability to benefit from the sustainable use of the Ocean.

As Nauru works to protect and enhance its economic returns from fisheries, we also seek to benefit from other sustainable uses of the Ocean and its resources. It is important to diversify our portfolio. Marine eco-tourism that highlights our natural and cultural heritage, aquaculture projects, as well as seabed mineral exploration. This exploration will unlock scientific knowledge of the deep ocean and future recovery of seabed minerals that will facilitate our transition to clean technologies.

There is important work for the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to do in this regard and we call on, its member States and all stakeholders to complete its work to adopt a world class regulatory regime that allows for the responsible collection of seafloor minerals while ensuring the protection of the environment and to implement the vision of UNCLOS.

We also wanted to highlight the continued importance of addressing IUU fishing. No one country can combat it alone and I am pleased that we are working closely with our neighbors in Micronesia to jointly and collectively combat IUU fishing through a subregional strategy addressing the issue of transitional crime and maritime security. We welcome other partnerships which can help us combat this scourge.

Before closing, I wanted to share my quote for this week's conference "Climate action equals ocean action. We protect our climate and we save our ocean." And we save ourselves.

Thank you.