



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
UNITED NATIONS MEMBER STATES

Permanent Mission of Samoa to the United Nations
685 Third Ave, Suite 1102
New York, N.Y. 10017

Phone: (212)599-1658
Fax: (212)599-0797
Email: psidschair@gmail.com

INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES GROUP (PSIDS) AT THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE FOR THE OCEAN 2022

Interactive Dialogue: #3 Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems

Date: Tuesday 28 July 2022 (3-6pm)

Time Limit: 3 minutes

Co-Chairs,

It's an honor to be part of this interactive dialogue on marine and coastal ecosystems, and to speak on behalf of Pacific SIDS, at this interactive dialogue session on marine and coastal ecosystems.

For Pacific SIDS, SDG14 is a core component of the sustainable Development Agenda, as all other SDGs have strong links to the health of the ocean.

The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' *Palau Declaration on The Ocean: Life and Future* (2014) and the *Pohnpei Ocean Statement: A Course to Sustainability* (2016), speaks to the interconnections between the ocean and the lives of Pacific people, as well as an ongoing commitment to care for ocean health as the basis for well-being of the people. However, the Ocean is not just important for the Pacific, but for the entire world. The Ocean plays a major role in systems ranging from food to transport, water cycles to climate. The Ocean truly connects all of us and we all have a responsibility to protect, conserve and manage the marine environment for the health and prosperity of future generations.

Co-Chairs,

The UN declared this the decade of ecosystem restoration, as we are in the grips of a triple planetary crisis – climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Our island and ocean ecosystems in particular are vulnerable to these impacts. The Pacific Islands continue to work towards the Aichi targets and SDG 14 and we look forward to the adoption of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, but we cannot do this alone.

The Pacific Region is home to the world's largest tuna populations. Our region remains one of the best-managed fisheries in the world and we invite partners to consider and replicate this model within their own regions. Our Pacific success is based on a long history of managing our coastal resources through strong marine protected area approaches. This concept is not new to us and goes by many traditional names, including tapu, tambu, and tabu, Ra'ui, bul, and mo, to name a few. These traditional concepts have been translated into modern marine protected areas, and the region leads the world in marine protection with

some of the world's largest marine protected areas. This is just one example of how traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities can inform action to conserve and restore ecosystems.

Co-Chairs,

Coastal and marine ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass, and coral reefs provide important ecosystem services - they are breeding grounds for marine life, carbon sinks and they protect coastlines from erosion. These marine ecosystems are under threat from pollution, climate change, acidification, invasive species, and other human activities. Maintaining healthy coastal systems is crucial for adapting to and mitigating climate change impacts and for sustainable development. The community structure of ecosystems may change, but diverse ecosystems support each other and create spaces for species to recover. By reducing external pressures we can support marine ecosystems and therefore support Pacific communities that depend on them.

The *UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development* provides a real opportunity to progress understanding of the climate ocean nexus, including the impacts of climate change on ocean ecosystems and the living resources they provide. This knowledge is crucial and we welcome partnerships to join the Regional programme on Integrated Ocean Management under the *Decade of Ocean Science*, to support and build scientific knowledge along with traditional knowledge and capacity-building activities.

We support the development of the 30% protected area target in the Global Biodiversity Framework, within the context of a 100% managed ocean. With this in mind, we also support the conclusion at IGC5 of the international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction as a key development in international law to further progress toward SDG 14.

Co-Chairs,

We call for strong practical actions for species protection from locally and nationally controllable stressors, meeting CITES, CMS, CBD, and other Biodiversity-related MEA obligations.

We recognize the creative thinking that is being done to develop new finance solutions and create sustainable blue economies. This is a very exciting innovative stage in sustainable development and we welcome greater partnerships between sectors and financial institutions.

Co-Chairs,

In conclusion, PSIDS urge the global community to accelerate action to halt biodiversity and ecosystem decline in the ocean and coasts. The partnerships and actions that arise from this Conference will be crucial to working together with new and innovative ideas to solve the existential crisis that we face. We are buoyed by the participation in this conference and the momentum that this will provide and call on all states to commit to action to achieve the SDGs, especially those that relate to climate and the health of the Ocean as key components of the 2030 Agenda.

I thank you.