

**Statement by Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General
and Pacific Ocean Commissioner, Henry Puna**

**Interactive Dialogue No. 7: “Enhancing the conservation and sustainable
use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as
reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”**

Thursday 30 June, from 3pm to 6pm
Tejo Hall, Altice Arena

(3 minutes; 433 words)

*Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The Pacific Islands Forum stands in solidarity with all States and Partners in upholding and implementing international law to enhance management and sustainable use of oceans and their resources.

2. As guardians of the largest body of ocean on this planet, our intrinsic ties to the ocean spans time immemorial, delicately woven through a Pacific tapestry of cultures, shared bonds and stewardship.

3. We join the international community in welcoming the upcoming fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the 1982 *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* on 10 December 1982.

4. We celebrate the Convention and its critical role as the Constitution of the oceans, providing the blueprint for the rights and entitlements critical to our aspirations and to the survival of our people.

5. Indeed, it shapes our future as the Blue Pacific Continent by securing for us the rights and privileges to use our ocean space. And the sustainable management of ocean resources.

Significantly, the Convention affords us our status as large ocean states covering territories with a combined EEZ of approximately 42 million square kilometres, and the political, economic and socio-cultural opportunities that come with it.

6. Excellencies, we reiterate the threats of climate change and sea-level rise as the defining issue that imperils the livelihoods and wellbeing of our peoples.

7. We therefore make a further **call to all UN Members to join the Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-related Sea-level rise**, which is rooted in the Convention and in international law.

8. We further emphasise the expeditious finalisation this year of the global treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdictions.

9. Excellencies, let me also highlight the role of broader international law, principles, and customary international law, in shaping and safeguarding our ocean health.

10. Our Pacific Leaders continue to be concerned about the threats of nuclear contamination. We therefore call on all States to implement the Convention and other key global instruments, such as the Anti-Dumping London Convention, to protect our marine environment.

11. Through our *Treaty of Rarotonga*, we are determined to ensure that the bounty and beauty of our land and sea remains the heritage of our peoples and our descendants in perpetuity to be enjoyed by all in peace.

12. Excellencies, international law must continue to guide our voyage to enhance conservation and sustainable use of our oceans, to ramp up actions to implement SDG14, and ultimately to safeguard our One Blue Ocean for our One Blue Planet.

Obrigado. I thank you.