



Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia to the United Nations

STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY

THE HONOURABLE SHAWN EDWARD

Minister for Education, Sustainable Development,
Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training

at the

*Second United Nations Conference to Support the
Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14:
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine
resources for sustainable development*

Lisbon, Portugal

June 28, 2022

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Mr. President,

At the Rio+20 Summit in 2012, member states collectively recognized that our oceans and seas were not healthy, and pledged to protect and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, and to maintain their biodiversity. In 2014, the outcome of the SIDS Conference -the SAMOA pathway - addressed the critical role that oceans and seas play in the sustainable development of Small Island States. And in 2017, two years after the historic adoption of the 2030 Agenda, that provided us with the stand alone Goal 14, on oceans, we gathered for the first UN Oceans conference. Today, we arrive at this second UN Oceans conference against the unsettling backdrop of multiple crises which have plunged national governments and global systems into unprecedented challenges. The scaling up of Ocean Action based on science and innovation is now an absolute imperative.

Saint Lucia echos the sentiments of gratitude expressed by previous speakers to the Government's of Kenya and Portugal for their stewardship of this second Conference on the Oceans – with the ambitious goal of mobilising action to propel much needed science based innovative solutions aimed at initiating an effective new chapter of global ocean action.

Mr. President,

It must be emphasized that the oceans are of strategic importance, and constitute an irreplaceable development resource for island states. Saint Lucia stands with our fellow Small Island Developing States at the forefront of global efforts to ensure the successful implementation of SDG 14. The sustainable development of Saint Lucia, like that of all SIDS, is intrinsically linked to our oceans and seas. We rely heavily on a healthy marine environment for numerous social and economic activities including tourism, fisheries, transportation, food and nutrition and recreation.

The Government of Saint Lucia has long recognized this heavy dependence on the island's coastal and marine resources, and the related pressures that are exerted on the environment; and we have actively engaged in the development of frameworks and mechanisms to facilitate the effective conservation, management and sustainable use of our marine resources. Our *National Ocean Policy and Strategic Action Plan*, coupled with our *Coastal and Marine Spatial Plan* promotes and supports our transition to a Blue Economy, linking economic viability to the continued health and vibrancy of the national oceans and coastal areas.

We continue to work to address threats to the conservation of our marine habitats and resources. Through dedicated research, a *Plastic Waste National Level Quantification and Sectoral Material Flow Analysis*, the development of a *National Source Inventory on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter* and other initiatives, we are developing Saint Lucia's *Marine Litter Management Action Plan*. Our teams on the ground consistently work to ensure that to our plans and policies are guided by the appropriate science and innovation. But there remains much work to be done, and it is our hope that in this UN decade of ocean science for sustainable development, that our research and policy interventions can be supported by meaningful partnerships that contribute relevant infrastructures and investments.

Mr. President,

This conference provides the opportunity to move from ideas to action, to galvanize opportunities that establish an equilibrium between economic and social progress and environmental sustainability. We must create favorable conditions that simultaneously promote economic growth, environmental sustainability, social inclusion and the strengthening of ocean ecosystems.

We have come together today to work toward making tangible progress, through commitments - local, national, regional and global - to collectively meet the agreed targets under SDG 14. Our advancement toward these targets must be supported

by the best available scientific information and advice. We therefore, wish to echo the calls for the forging of appropriate partnerships which result in tangible investments in scientific research, cooperation and knowledge sharing that strengthen our efforts toward achieving multiple targets. If we are to leave no one behind, we need to engage innovatively on development solutions, tailored to the vulnerable and smallest countries.

Mr. President,

Saint Lucia remains committed to working toward the effective implementation of Goal 14 which is vital to re-shaping future development and a critical component of our post-covid socio-economic recovery. We welcome the opportunity to forge partnerships to advance our collective goal of ensuring the sustainability of all our nations, for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Thank you.